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VOLUME TWENTIETH.

GLASGOW:

WILLIAM COLLINS, S. FREDERICK ST.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.

ON

POLITICAL ECONOMY,

IN CONNEXION WITH THE

MORAL STATE AND MORAL PROSPECTS

OF

SOCIETY.

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

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CHAPTER XV.

On the Christian Education of the People.

1. We are now drawing towards that great conclusion, for the sake of which we have described the very lengthened course of our by-gone argument. We have laboured to demonstrate the futility of every expedient, which a mere political economy can suggest for the permanent well-being of a community. At best, they but tend to enlarge the absolute wealth of a country, without enlarging the relative comfort of the people who live in it. They may conduct to a larger, but not, on that account, to a happier society. They may tell on the condition of families, during those brief and evanescent seasons, when the population is somewhat in rear of the wealth; but, on the moment that this distance is overtaken, there will be the same straitness and discomfort as before. In new

countries, there might be a career of sensible advancement for centuries to come. But in old countries, if we count only on external resources, or the increase of means for the support of a population, leaving their numbers to proceed as they may, there is positively nothing which can save us from the habitual state of felt insufficiency and narrowness. There may be gleams of prosperity during the fluctuations, or the few short and successive stretches of enlargement which are yet in reserve for us. But all round, and in every possible direction, there is a besetting limit, which the mighty tide of an advancing population tends to overpass, and which, being impassable, throws the tide back again upon general society; charged, as it were, with a distress and a disorder that are extensively felt throughout the old countries of the civilized world. The only question remains then, Is there no way by which the tide can be arrested, before it comes into contact and collision with the barrier that repels it? Or, can the redundancy be prevented by a moral and pacific influence, rather than checked by the evils of extreme poverty, or that destroying turbulence which so often results from the distress and destitution of an overpeopled land?

2. The high road, then, to a stable sufficiency and comfort among the people, is through the medium of their character; and this effectuated by other lessons altogether than those of political economy. We object not to the utmost possible illumination of the popular mind; nor do we share in the antipathies of those who would refuse science to the

multitude. It is not, however, by the instructions of the economic, but by those of a higher school, that the best economic condition of society will at length be realized. It is possible for men to bear an essential part in the workings of a mechanism, of whose principles and whose theory they are altogether unconscious—just as the planetary masses are unconscious of the magnificent regularity to which their own movements have given rise. The moving force, that is to advance the general multitude to a better and higher condition than they now occupy, will not be brought to bear upon them by the demonstrations, however just, of any theory; and, in fact, the right impulse, and the right habit, have often been exemplified, and by large classes of peasantry, before the theory of population was ever heard of. It is so in Norway; and, most assuredly, without any inoculation of principle from the school of Malthus. It was so in Scotland, long before the promulgation of his doctrines. In both countries, they realized, in practice, what, in system and philosophy, they did not understand. A moral and intelligent peasantry, imbued with a taste for the respectabilities of life, mixing prudence and foresight with every great practical step in the history of their doings, holding it discreditable to enter upon marriage without the likelihood of provision for a family—such a peasantry have more than once been exhibited in the annals of the world, and may be made to re-appear. If, by any means, the elements of such a character can again be put together, and made general in society, we should behold the exemplification

of the Malthusian doctrine, with or without the comprehension of its principles. It is not, most assuredly, the study of these principles that will germinate the character; and it is from another quarter altogether, than the demonstrations of political economy, that we are to obtain the fulfilment of those blessings to society, which the science can only point out without being able to realize.

3. On no other subject does Christianity more evince its immense importance to the well-being of society. In the first place, it is quite palpable that they are its earnest and devoted teachers, who have the greatest power in drawing the multitude to their lessons, and establishing for themselves that most secure and deeply-seated of all popularity, which is grounded on the sacredness of their office, and on the subserviency of its faithful ministrations to the comfort, and the virtue, and the dearest interests of families. The mere disciples of a general literature or politics, little reflect on the prodigious force of that moral ascendancy which is possessed by a parish clergyman, who superadds, to the attraction of his pulpit, the charm and the efficacy of his household services; and who, by the countless attentions of an unwearied Christian benevolence, has ingratiated both his person and his cause with the hearts of those among whom he expatiates. His direct aim is neither to purchase a reputation for himself, nor even to advance the temporal comfort of his people. It is to prepare them for immortality; yet, in the single-hearted prosecution of this object, he becomes the all-powerful, though, perhaps, the unconscious instru-

ment of those secondary, those subordinate blessings, which form the only ones that a mere worldly philanthropist cares for. The truth is, that the lessons of the gospel which he teaches, are all on the side of reflection, and sobriety, and that loftiness of character which consists in the predominance of the moral over the animal nature of man. A disciple of the New Testament, whose views are sublimed by its doctrines and its hopes, has gotten a superiority over the passions; a certain nobility of soul; a reach of perspective to distant consequences, whether on this, or the other side of the grave; an ascendency of sentiment over sense; and, withal, a refinement and elevation of taste, which, though caught at first from converse with spiritual and eternal things, still adheres to him, even when busied with the interests and concerns of the present life: and these, altogether, form the best guarantees against that impetuous appetency, which first leads to early marriages, and afterwards lands in squalid destitution, the teeming families that spring from them. And, besides, in that book there are so many pointed admonitions, that each should provide for himself, and for his own household; such a preference for the single state, when the married endangers a man's Christianity, or his performance of its duties; such great examples, as well as precepts of independence—especially by Paul, who says, that "if a man will not work, neither should he eat," and who himself laboured, with his own hands, for the supply of his own necessities, rather than be burdensome; that, as the undoubted effect upon the whole, the honest and fre-

quent perusal of Scripture by a Christian people, does associate, in their minds, both the present and the prospective cares of a family with the solemn duties of religion. This is not a picture, but a reality, often exemplified in the abode of a cottage patriarch—where, along with his Christianity, we may witness a sufficiency, and a cast of elevation, not to be found in the houses of the irreligious and the unholy. The very library of old and favourite authors upon his shelves, is but in keeping with the general fulness of a tenement, usually better stocked and provided than that of any of his fellows. The Christianity of the man has engendered a wisdom, and a consistency, and a self-command, that led him to begin well in his entrance upon a family; and so to build up a respectable sufficiency, which, with a reckless and precipitate commencement, he could never have attained. An individual Christian is generally in better comfort and condition than other men. A whole parish of Christians would be a parish of well-conditioned families.

4. But here it is of importance to remark, that, for the production of a general economic effect, we have not to wait the production of a general Christianity. When expatiating on the connexion between these two elements, we have often to encounter a certain shrewd incredulity, as if an expectation of a more elevated state for the majority hung on the fulfilment of a prior expectation, which is in itself Utopian—even that the majority shall be converted. The imagination is, that, for the purpose of any great or sensible effect in this way, the religious character must be of co-extensive

magnitude with the economic improvement; whereas there is no truth, of which the most faithful and experienced of our clergymen have a firmer, though it be a melancholy assurance, than the exceeding rarity of conversion—there being many streets in our cities, many parishes in our land, where, in the high sense and significancy of the term, the number of real Christians might not reach to one in fifty. And the question therefore is, How can we anticipate either a general economic, or a general moral effect, through the medium of a Christianity, which, in respect of its saving and spiritual influence makes such little way among the families? But here it is not adverted to—and we admit it is indispensable to the force of our argument—that the secondary influence of Christianity goes a great way farther than its primary or direct influence. For every individual whom it converts, it may, by its reflex operation, civilize a hundred. We have the palpable exemplification of this in Sabbath-schools, where, in a few weeks from their commencement, we may perceive a decency, and a docility, and an improved habit of cleanliness and order, long before there is ground for the assurance, that even so much as one of the pupils has yet been Christianized. And what is true of children in a school, is alike true of grown-up people in a parish—where the regularities of Sabbath observation, and the humanizing influence of ministerial attentions, and the general recognition of what is right, and reputable, and seemly, have all been in force, perhaps a century ago, and been handed down, with increasing effect, from genera-

tion to generation. It is of the utmost argumentative value upon this subject, that one man of decided piety, in a little vicinage, will impress, if not his own piety, at least the respectability of his habits and appearance, on the greater number of its families. They can admire, and even imitate, the graces of his character; they can aspire after, and even realize, the decencies of his condition; without so much as comprehending, or far less sharing, the unseen principle which has germinated them all. It is thus that Christianity has elevated the general standard of morals; and so spread a beneficent influence, far and wide, among the many, beyond the limit of its own proper and peculiar influence upon the few. It is this which gives it the property of a purifying and preserving salt in every community of human beings; and that, not merely in respect of those virtues which enter into the moral character, but also in respect of those virtues which are essential to the economic well-being of a people. Ten righteous men among the thousands of Sodom would have saved that city from destruction; and a like proportion would, in our modern day, save the thousands of general society from that utter debasement of profligacy and wretchedness, into which, without the presence of Christianity in the midst of them, they will inevitably fall.*

* We are aware of no country which presents a more interesting field for observation than Holland—because none, perhaps, so close upon the extreme limit of its natural resources; and, therefore, none so dependent on the moral habits of its population for their economic well-being. We have great value for a recent communication from that part of the world, which appeared in the

5. But we must here remark, that, for the purpose of a general economic improvement, to be brought about by the means of Christian educa-

Sunday-School Teacher's Magazine; and from which we present a few extracts:—

"I have spent five months, since last September, in Holland; living, for the most part, in an inland town, whence I could extend my walks into the rural and fishing villages around me; seeing much of the outward manifestations of character among the people. But in Holland, such is the public provision for the instruction of the lower orders, that every child is within reach of a good day-school, of which few do not actually enjoy the advantage. These schools, moreover, though themselves rather of a general, than purely religious nature, are not meant to supersede, but to harmonize and co-operate with the catechetical instructions of the churches throughout the provinces. Thus, religious knowledge is widely diffused; though, in respect to it, much of course depends on the comparative purity of doctrine and discipline, as well as on the comparative degrees of vital godliness, which are found in the different communions and congregations to which the parents may belong. Not only so, but although the public day-schools have had far more attention paid to them of late years than at any former period, still education has, for a long time, been so common and so cheap, that almost all old persons are found able to read.

"Thus, what your readers and their friends are striving to effect for their dear *mother-country*, our Dutch neighbours have already, through the good providence of God, actually accomplished, for what they call their beloved *father-land*. Surely, then, it must be interesting to the former, to know what, if nothing more, are the outward and obvious results of such a measure of success in their own favourite enterprise—an enterprise so intimately affecting the character and happiness of the millions that now people Great Britain and Ireland."

"The first feature, in the lower ranks, which strikes a Briton on coming amongst the Hollanders, is the almost universal decency of manners and dress which prevails amongst them; and that in spite of the extent of poverty which is found in these once flourishing, but now much-decayed provinces. Your readers will ask, why there should be so much poverty?—the reply to which is easily furnished out of history."—"We must not therefore impute it to education, that there are many thousands of poor families and individuals in Holland; but ought rather to investigate what the effects of that peculiarity have been, on a people among whom this grievous extent of poverty has been the inevitable result of quite different circumstances.

tion, a gradual abolition of the compulsory provision for indigence, which now obtains in England, and hangs menacingly over Ireland, seems to us indispensable. We can anticipate no rise of wages, no elevation in the state and sufficiency of the working classes, from any efforts to instruct and

" I am now referring to the external manners and appearance of the lower ranks in Holland. It is remarkable, that persons travelling there about sixty years ago, represent the lower classes as very boorish in their manners, and as intemperate in the use of ardent spirits. But I found them invariably respectful, and willing to oblige me; while, as to intemperance, if it was to be found at all, it must have been very much hid from public notice. for I could not perceive either drunkards or brawlers in any quarter, either in town or country, during my whole residence among them. That they are universally sober, I dare not affirm; strong liquors, of various kinds, were very common, and very cheap; the damp nature of their climate, and the seafaring habits of many of the people, present a kind of apology for drinking; yet, in spite of all this, I must again affirm, that they are very far superior, at present, to the British in this respect.

" But to what are we to ascribe this change for the better, in the course of the last sixty years? Not certainly," &c.—" May we not rather cite the following causes? First, The extension and improvement of daily schools, which began just about sixty years ago, and which have been continued, under all the changes of government, up to the present day. Secondly, To the awakening effects of public calamities, and the humbling influence of foreign domination on the members of the Presbyterian, and other Protestant churches, to which about two-thirds of the people are professedly attached. The Dutch, like the Israelites of old, were the children of many prayers, and the heirs of many privileges; but they, also, in the pride of their hearts, forgot God: he, therefore, in mercy, visited them with the rod of his chastisement. They were brought low, and were, many of them, led to cry unto the Lord in their distresses; and the Lord has had pity on them, and made his own work revive in the midst of them.

" The outward decency, I might rather say, the respectability of the lower ranks, included a very remarkable observance of the Lord's day; such, indeed, as I did not expect to find on any part of the continent of Europe," &c.

" I cannot conclude without remarking, that the absence of the poor's laws seems to be one of the chief blessings of Holland. By having no compulsory assessments, the virtues of liberality

Christianize them, however strenuous, if the pauperism and the education are to go on contemporaneously. We, in the first place, feel quite assured, rom the moral influences of this public charity, hat it operates as a dead weight on the ministrations of the clergymen, and stands most grievously in the way of their success. But, in the second place, however vigorous and effective his exertions may be, at the most, and while the present system of poor's laws continues, we shall have two distinct populations, each marked by opposite extremes of character. The clergyman, on the one hand, may reclaim hundreds to principle and sobriety, who shall form a wholesome and better class of peasantry. But the parish vestry, on the other, remains an attractive nucleus, around which there will gather and settle, in every little district of the land, a depraved and improvident class, whom the temptation of this legal charity has called into being, and who will bid inveterate defiance to all the moral energy which might be brought to bear upon them. The very presence of such a class, even though but a fraction of the community, will, with

and active benevolence are called out far more abundantly; and, by constant exercise, acquire a far higher degree of real practical vigour, than they could otherwise do amongst the rich; whilst the poor are grateful, frugal, and industrious. In short, all the lovely fruits of mutual Christian love and respect seem thus to be fostered, which might otherwise be injured or destroyed. I was particularly pleased with the mild and contented looks of many of the aged poor, and with the care and good housewifery shown in the apparel both of adults and children belonging to that class, I need not add, that in their food they are equally simple and contented.

"Such, then, are the remarks I find myself compelled to make, with respect to perhaps the best educated poor in Europe," &c.

their reckless habits, depress and overbear the general condition of labourers. A very few supernumeraries, we have seen, will suffice for this effect. So that whether the temptation to improvidence operates on all the people, or only on part of them, still that redundancy is generated which tells so adversely on the general rate of wages, and so on the comfort and circumstances of the population at large. Education will make head against mendicity. It will make head against poverty in any other form than that of being fixed and legalized, and invested with the power of challenging, as its right at the bar of justice, that relief which should have been left to the willing sympathies of nature. But shielded and encouraged as it is in the parishes of England, it will stand its ground, against every attempt to dislodge it from those innumerable fastnesses which it now occupies; and in spite of every counteractive, whether by the Christian or literary education of the people, will it remain an incubus on the prosperity and comfort of the lower orders.*

6. And we have further to remark, that as we look for no sensible improvement in the condition of the lower orders in England, while their present system of pauperism remains; we as little look for any sensible or general improvement in their character, by the means of education, if that is merely to be the education of letters, and not the education of principle. It is not scholarship alone, but scholarship impregnated with religion, that tells on

* In further illustration of this argument, see "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation," Vol. iii. page 388, quest. 272.

the great mass of society. We have no faith in the efficacy of mechanic institutes, or even of primary and elementary schools, for building up a virtuous and well-conditioned peasantry, so long as they stand dissevered from the lessons of Christian piety. There is a charm ascribed to the scholastic system of Scotland; and the sanguine imagination is, that by importing its machinery into England and Ireland, it will work the same marvellous transformation there, on the character of their people, that was experienced amongst ourselves. But it is forgotten, that a warm and earnest Christianity, was the animating spirit of all our peculiar institutions, for generations after they were framed; and that, wanting this, they can no more perform the function of moralizing the people, than skeletons can perform the functions, or put forth the faculties of living men. The scholastic is incorporated with the ecclesiastical system of Scotland; and that, not for the purposes of intolerance and exclusion, but for the purpose of sanctifying education, and plying the boyhood of our land with the lessons of the Bible. The scholarship of mere letters, might, to a certain extent, have diffused intelligence amongst the people; but, it is mainly to the presence and power of the religious ingredient, that the moral greatness of our peasantry is owing.

7. A common-place politician is mainly ignorant of the connexion which obtains, between the religion of a people, and the various civil and economical blessings which follow in its train. This single lesson, if but prized and proceeded on as it ought, were to him the greatest enlargement of

political wisdom; and numerous are the practical corollaries which flow from it. More especially, would it lead him to uphold an ecclesiastical establishment; but on very different grounds from those on which, in the spirit either of high-state toryism, or of high-church intolerance, it is so often contended for. There is with a class of thinkers, whom we have now in our eye, the vague imagination of a certain security derived from the connexion between church and state; insomuch, that, if this connexion were dissolved, they would apprehend the immediate downfal of all our social institutions. And we have no doubt, that, if any of the church establishments in our empire is to be exterminated, it will be in the spirit of a general undirected frenzy, that will not be satiated on any terms short of a wasteful and wide-spread overthrow. They will share in a common fate, because the objects of a common hostility. But this still leaves unexplained, the precise connexion, in the way of cause and consequence, between the existence of a religious establishment, and the stability of the general order of things. It is not because, through the lordly dispensation of its patronage, the higher orders are conciliated; or because, through the hereditary veneration of which it is the object, the lower orders are conciliated. These will be found but frail securities, on a day of wild and lawless innovation; and, without the revival of a diffused Christianity in our land, that day will speedily overtake us. It is thus that a religious establishment is of no value, but as an instrument of Christian good; and it is this, and

this alone, which should recommend it, either to the politician or the patriot. It is simply, as the best machine for the extensive Christianization of the families of a land, that it is at all worthy of being upholden; and, it is obvious, that, to this effect, a reckless, unprincipled, and unholy patronage, makes it altogether useless, perhaps worse than useless. It is our conscientious belief, that an establishment is an indispensable safeguard against a desolating flood of irreligion, but only in as far as that establishment is virtuously patronised. In other words, without the demolition of our existing machinery, but through its means, and provided that right and efficient men be appointed to work it, we hold that the country may still be saved. And, humanly speaking, its Christian instructors will be its only saviours. These reformers of our national morality will be the only reformers that will do us good. This is the great specific for the people's well-being; and, however derided by the liberalism of our age, or undervalued in the estimation of a merely secular politics; still, it is with the Christianity of our towns and parishes that the country is to stand or fall.

8. Our ecclesiastics are too little versant, and have therefore too little respect for the importance of political economy. And our economists stand at fully as wide a distance from things ecclesiastical. Both seem alike unconscious of the strong intermediate link that is between them, seeing that the chief objects of the one can only be accomplished through the successful exertions of the other. It was for the economists to have discov-

ered the connexion between a virtuous peasantry, and, through the consequent effect on population and wages, the greater sufficiency of their means, and their higher status in the commonwealth. But, while it was for them to perceive and point out this connexion; it is for the practical educationists alone, and, pre-eminently for the Christian educationists, to make it good. The one may demonstrate what the essential condition is, on which the economic well-being of the common people turns; but it is for the others, and for them only, to realize the condition. It is for them principally, or rather for them exclusively, to supply that element, wanting which, there is an utter impotency and failure, in all the doings and all the devisings of our politicians, either to bring about or to uphold a prosperous society. No enlargement in the means of subsistence can be of any possible avail, if so rapidly followed up as heretofore, and still more if exceeded by the irrepressible advances of the population. At this rate, a larger community would be but a larger mass of wretchedness, a wider field of heartless and sickening contemplation to every lover of the species. What he longs to rest and regale his eye upon, is the joyous spectacle, not of overcrowded, but, through the medium of cheerful, because well-paid industry, of comfortable families, substantially fed, respectably attired, and as respectably lodged in their snug and decent habitations. There is room, and there are resources in the country, not for an indefinite, but for a certain, and that a very large, yea, for a constantly, though not a quickly, increas-

ing number of such families. Beyond this number, we have no taste for mere multitude, for a swarm of human creatures, for a reckless and ragamuffin crew, overborne by that most grievous of all oppressions, the oppression of their own redundancy. If such be the general *morale* of the working classes, it is vain to look either for peace or plenty within our borders. The object will bid defiance to all agriculture and all commerce. At most, these can but stretch out the wealth of a country, but without any sensible enlargement, if there be a stretching out of the population proportionably thereto. Each successive expansion will, in this case, be but a temporary shift, a brief postponement of the evil day, the support or suspension, for a moment, by some frail tenicle, ere the nation is precipitated into a gulf of wretchedness or anarchy. It would seem to argue a growing sense of desperation among our public men, that their schemes of patriotism and philanthropy are so thickening of late upon us; while but a semblance of relief, or, at the best, a short-lived respite will be all the result of them. It is by the efficacy of moral means, working a moral transformation, and by that alone, that our deliverance will be effected; and little do the mere advocates of retrenchment, and colonization, and public works, and poor-laws, and other merely political expedients for the amelioration of the people—little do they know how utterly powerless all these enterprises are, while the Christianity of the land is unprovided for, and its Christian institutions are left inoperative, from the want of zealous and energetic labourers to fill them.

9. And perhaps this indifference or incredulity, on the part of politicians and political economists, lies much deeper than we have yet ventured to say. It may be something still more hopeless than ignorance. We fear, that with many of them, it may be distaste and antipathy. There is a certain style of Christianity, a lifeless, inert, and meagre style of it, which is tolerated in general society. But when it comes to be Christianity in earnest, the Christianity that speaketh urgently and importunately to the consciences of men, the uncompromising Christianity, that enjoins the holiness of the New Testament in all its spirituality and extent, and asserts the doctrine of the New Testament in all its depth and all its peculiarity—such a Christianity has been very generally denounced as fanaticism; and its faithful evangelical expounders have very generally had a stigma affixed to them, and been outcasts from the patronage of the state. And yet this is the only Christianity that will either attract or moralize the population; and that, not because of its deceitful adaptation to vulgar prejudices, but, because of its truly divine adaptation to the actual workings of the human mind, and the felt necessities of human nature. While this enmity to the truth as it is in Jesus operates in the hearts of our rulers, it is perhaps a vain expectation, that the civil and political importance of its being sounded forth from the pulpits of our land shall come to be recognised by them. On this subject, they may have been struck with judicial blindness; and ere Christianity shall manifest its power to regenerate our social condition, and over-

spread the land with prosperous and contented families; perhaps it will first vindicate itself on our ungodly nation, in the utter dissolution of an economy which disowns it, in the vengeance of some fearful overthrow.

10. But however blind our mere earthly politicians may be to the rationale of that process, by which man is regenerated into a new moral character, they clearly apprehend the connexion, between the existence of such a character, and the economic well-being either of the country or of the individual who possesses it. Grant but the general ascendancy of principle—and, along with this, you will have a prudence, and a prospective caution, and a superiority to mere animal or constitutional impulses, which must necessarily ensure the habit of later marriages, and so, of smaller families. And then, of itself, by a law of political economy, which can no more be contravened than a law of nature, the state of the common people will necessarily be raised. There are only two ways in which to augment the price of labour—either by a diminution of the supply, or by an increase of the effective demand for it. But the whole of our preceding argument goes to prove, that this demand for labour cannot be carried beyond a certain limit. There is a necessary limit to agricultural produce, or, in other words, to the maintenance of labour, without which there can be no effective demand for it. Consequent to this, or rather almost identical with this, there is a limit to that employment, for the produce of which, there might be obtained in return the subsistence

of the labourers. There is a limit to the extension of that capital, the accumulation of which has been regarded by many as the grand specific for the indefinite employment and maintenance of the labouring classes. There is a limit to the extension of foreign trade, which has been imagined to afford a field for the profitable industry of our workmen, as unbounded as are the resources and magnitude of the globe. There is a limit to any brief or temporary enlargement, which might ensue on the commutation of taxes and tithes. We would not say that there is a limit to the enlargement, for we hold, that no enlargement whatever of the means of subsistence would accrue to the community, from the abolition of the law of primogeniture. So that we should hold it utterly hopeless to obtain a secure and permanent elevation in the state of the working classes, by a mere increase in one term of the proportion; that is, in the effective demand for their labour. The proportion will remain as unfavourable to them as before, should there be a like contemporaneous increase in the other term of it—that is, in the supply of labour, or in the number of labourers. It is because the rate of advancing population may outstrip the rate of enlargement in any one of the resources now specified, or in all of them put together—that in every stage of the progress of society, there may be felt a continued pressure on the means of subsistence. But it is in the latter stages, it is in old countries, where all the barriers recede most slowly, because nearest to the place of their extreme and ultimate attainment, and where, at the same time, the power

and tendency of increase on the part of the population are as great as ever—it is there where the pressure is felt most strongly; more in Britain than in America, for example; more in the Netherlands or in France than in Russia. It is this increase in the supply of labour, up to, and often beyond the increase in its demand; it is this rapid occupation, or rather overflow by the one of every enlargement that is made in the other; it is this which sustains, under every possible advancement in the resources of the land, the pressure of the population on the food, and makes the problem of their secure and permanent comfort so very baffling, and as yet, so very hopeless.

11. In the futility of every attempt permanently to relieve the wants, or to raise the comforts of the people, by means of an increase on one term of the proportion—the effective demand for labour—we are shut up, as our only refuge, to a diminution of the other term—that is, the supply of labour. The only expedient which we have yet considered, and which proceeds by an operation on this second term, is that of emigration. We have tried to demonstrate, how impotent and ineffectual this expedient is; and how utterly unable we are, by all the successive drafts or transformations of families that we shall ever make, to prevent the fulness, even to a distension, of people in the land. We feel assured, that it is not by drawing off the redundancy of the population, after it is formed, that we can uphold a well-conditioned state of society—but by preventing the formation of that redundancy. In the whole round of expedients, we

are persuaded, that this is the only one which, however obnoxious to sentimentalists, can avail for the solution of a problem otherwise irreducible. It has been the theme, sometimes of ridicule, and sometimes even of a virtuous, though, surely, a misplaced indignation; its distinctive excellence being, that it harmonizes the moral and economic interests of a community, and, indeed, can only take effect in proportion to the worth and wisdom of our people.

12. In the political economy of Dr Smith, society is prosperous only when in progress. He confines his view only to one term—an increase in the demand for labour, or in the means of its support. He adverts not to the general prosperity that might ensue by a mere operation on the other term, or by a moderation in the supply of labour. He looks only to the augmentation of physical means; and perceives not, that, when these are stationary, it is still in the power of moral causes to uphold, what he terms a hearty state of the commonwealth. It was not otherwise to be expected; for his work, great and enlightened though it be, was long prior to the clear and convincing expositions of Malthus on the subject of population. And, accordingly, he makes the condition of the labourer to depend *entirely* on the state of society, in regard to the progress which it is making in wealth—that if this be on the increase, the condition is prosperous; if stationary, dull; if declining, miserable. According to him, the wages of labour must be higher in an advancing, than in an advanced state of society; insomuch that, after the wealth

of a country has attained to its maximum, its industrious classes, comprising the large mass of the population, are worse off than when the country was only proceeding to the maximum. Now this were necessarily and universally, true, if wages depended only on one element—that is, the extent of the effective demand for it. When the means for the maintenance of labour increase, and so, for the time being, are somewhat ahead of the population, the competition is in favour of the workmen—who receive larger offers, and a larger maintenance, in this state of relative plenty. But should the population be encouraged by this state of things, the absolute plenty may remain, but the relative plenty is at an end; so that, with a population again pressing on the means of subsistence, the competition is against the workmen—each glad to find employment, though with but an inferior and scanty remuneration. This process has been repeatedly exemplified in the history of states; and it would seem to warrant the apprehension of some stern and mysterious necessity for the hopeless, the irrecoverable degradation of the lower orders—whose prosperity would thus appear to be in the inverse proportion of the country's abundance; insomuch, that to reach the extreme wealth of a land, might be to reach the extreme of depression and despondency for the great bulk of its inhabitants: as in China, the teeming productiveness of whose soil forms no guarantee against the constant want and wretchedness of its common people, or even the periodical starvation of millions.

13. Such instances speak strongly for the utter inefficacy, in the long run, of all those expedients which go but to enlarge the maintenance of labour, and so, the effective demand for it. That there have been many such successive enlargements, and that there are more still in reserve, even for the oldest and most civilized countries of the world, may be most readily admitted. Yet they form no security against either a continuous pressure all along, or a severe ultimate pressure, augmenting, perhaps, and becoming more intense and intolerable, with every approach that is made to the extreme limit of the country's resources. There is not yet a state in the world, where the actual capabilities for the maintenance of a population, do not fall short of the potential capabilities; and, with every new advance of the former upon the latter, there will, of course, be a slackening, as it were, of the pressure—a certain relief from that feeling of straitness, to which, in almost every stage of its progress, the population of a country is exposed. Yet this may be just a putting off of the evil day; and it does afford but a gloomy perspective to the lover of his species, when, as he looks forward on the economic advancement of society, he perceives an ultimate barrier, beyond which there can be no enlargement, and no possibility of mitigation. We confess that our anticipations are greatly more cheering; believing as we do, that, even in regard to earthly prospects, and earthly prosperity, a much brighter destination is in reserve for humanity. We admit, that there is a necessary and impassable limit to the extension of the phy-

sical resources of the globe ; so that if the enlargement of these were our only confidence, as it seems the confidence of most of our economists, we should give up, in despair, a permanent amelioration in the state and circumstances of our general population. Our confidence, then, is not in the enlargement of those physical resources, from whence we are to count on an increase in the effective demand for labour—it is chiefly, I might almost say exclusively, in the efficacy of a moral cause, from whence we are to look for moderation in the supply of it. When this is brought into operation, we shall find, that the wages of labour do not necessarily sink with the cessation of a country's advancement in wealth; that, even through the latest stages of this advancement, wages may indefinitely rise; and, after the stationary ultimatum shall have been reached in all the countries of the earth, still there will remain a way by which the industrious classes might be upheld in higher prosperity and comfort, than at any by-gone period of the world's history they had ever realized.

14. The two expedients, then, of pauperism and education, stand very broadly and discernibly contrasted with each other, in the influence they respectively have on that proportion which we have now dwelt upon. By the one, the proportion is turned against, and by the other on the side of, the population. The one increases, the other lessens, the ratio of the numbers to the food. There is no withstanding of this operation ; and there is no withstanding of its consequence. And the adoption of both expedients together were most griev

ous impolicy. The one would neutralize, or, rather, the one, like the rod of Aaron, would swallow up, would absorb the other; and be itself of paramount influence, at least on the economic state of the lower orders. The pauperism which enlisted all the sordid and sensual appetencies of our nature on the side of improvidence, would prevail in the struggle, over all the moral counteractives of any system of education, however wise, and however energetic. The contest between a good and an evil principle, should no more be sanctioned or set agoing, by the reigning power of the state, than it is by the reigning power of the universe. In Scotland, they ordained education for the people; and in all those parishes, which stand sufficiently aloof from the contagious neighbourhood of England, do we behold a peasantry sustained in comparative comfort and virtuous independence. In England, they ordained a poor-law; and the cry of distress and discontent is just the louder, in proportion to the lavishness of its ministrations. In Ireland, they propose to ordain both education and a poor-law. This were the Manicheism of human government, and a frightful disorder will be the result of it. Did the evil barely neutralize the good, so as to make on the whole an innocent composition of the two ingredients, it might be viewed with less alarm. But it will be found not to be an innocent, but a mischievous composition. Burke had the sagacity shrewdly and instantly to perceive this. His was the wisdom of intuition, so that, without formal development, or the aid of any logical process, he often, by a single glance, made

the discovery of a great principle ; and, by a single word, memorably and felicitously expressed it. That education is the cheap defence of nations, is one of the weightiest of those sentences, or oracular sayings, which have ever fallen from any of the seers or sages of our land. And he characterized, with no less force and justness, the other expedient for the amelioration of his country, when he pronounced, of a legal charity for the relief of indigence, bearing on its forehead the smile and promise of a benevolence which is never realized—that it was downright fraud.

Note.

The only remark which we feel disposed to make upon the reperusal of this chapter, is on the close practical affinity between the work of the ecclesiastics and the objects of the economists—and yet the grievous lack of sympathy or of a common understanding between these two classes. Nevertheless, and however few there may be in consequence who enter on the walk of this speculation, we are aware of few lessons more deeply interesting and important, than those which teach the reciprocal influences that pass and repass between the moral character and the economic comfort of a people.

CHAPTER XVI.

Conclusion.

1. Political economy has had great influence on the politics of the world. The two are distinct from each other in themselves—nevertheless, in practice they are so intimately blended, that if the former were but well understood and consistently acted upon, the results in the latter department would be quite invaluable.

2. One palpable example of this, is the effect of an enlightened political economy, in doing away the commercial jealousy of nations. The objects of that jealousy were, in the general, altogether meaningless—the preservation of a monopoly or of a colonial dependence, or of some exclusive privilege, which, when wrested from the state, that had lavished in their defence an enormous amount both of blood and treasure, was found after all to have been of no real or intrinsic worth to the country that possessed them. It is thus that empires and states have entered fiercely into contest for interests which were altogether illusory. We do not happen to think that the system of free trade will lead to any sensible enlargement of wealth in almost any land; and that they who calculated upon this, did not advert to the existence, or at least to the proximity of a natural limit, lying a

very little way beyond the artificial one, and by which all commerce as well as all agriculture is bounded. Nevertheless, and however disappointed and defeated in their sanguine anticipations many may have been as to the economical effects of the system, its moral effects, in that it cancels a topic of ever-recurring controversy, and by which the peace and brotherhood of nations were kept in perpetual hazard, give an importance and a value to the policy of the free-trade system, which are beyond all computation.

3. Now, what is true of foreign, is alike true of home politics. An enlightened political economy would not only do away much of the jealousy which springs up among different nations; but would do away much of the jealousy and hostile feeling which are still so prevalent between the different orders of a state. For example, if the real incidence of the taxes be upon land, what a world of misconception and of malignant passion would be saved, were taxes laid ostensibly as well as virtually upon the landlords. Or, if not prepared to act on a conclusion still so remote from all the ordinary notions upon the subject, what a practical reconciliation it would effect between the wealthier and the poorer classes, were taxes universally removed from the necessaries of life, and universally laid on income or on unquestionable luxuries. We believe, that though the whole of our public revenue were raised by means of a territorial impost, it would ultimately add nothing to the burden which now lies on the proprietors of the land; and that they, when fighting against such a commutation, are fighting in defence

of an imaginary interest. We believe that the same observation applies to the abolition of the corn laws; and that, if both the commercial and the financial reforms were gradually, but at length completely and conclusively effected, the lords of the soil would find their wealth unimpaired, and their influence prodigiously raised by it. When once divested altogether of the character of monopolists, and, still more, when declaredly and obviously the only tax-payers in the kingdom; we can scarcely imagine the vast moral ascendancy which they would henceforth acquire in all the affairs and deliberations of the commonwealth. Such would be their substantial gain, and we honestly think without the deduction of one farthing from their revenues, though they should both quit the monopoly, and take upon themselves the whole burden of the taxes. And what a death-blow would be thus inflicted on the vocation of demagogues! What a sweetening influence it would have on British society, after the false medium was dissipated, through which the high and the low now look on each other as natural enemies! Such a political economy as this, had it preceded, would also have superseded all those tempestuous politics which are now in agitation. Parliamentary reform, left without any ulterior object, would have been felt as if uncalled for; or at least the rancour, the exasperation, and bitterness, now connected with the prosecution of it, would have been completely done away.

4. The landed aristocracy have partly brought this upon themselves, by their blind resistance to

all innovation, and by their tenacious adherence to what they imagine, but falsely imagine, to be their own indispensable interest. Had they paid all taxes, and left all trade unfettered, there would have no political sacrifice been required of them; and they would have remained in the undisturbed possession of their natural, their rightful inheritance, as lords of the commonwealth. But the democracy of England, fired by a sense of injury, have now made head against them; and may, perhaps, wrest from them, by force, that which ought to have been freely and willingly conceded in the spirit of an enlightened policy. We should rejoice in such a compromise between the two parties, as that both a full commutation of the taxes, and the full establishment of commercial liberty, unshackled by impositions or restraints of any sort, were at length effected, but effected gradually. What we fear in the present spirit of reform, is its impetuosity, and that it may not only, without the necessary delay, precipitate right changes, but, without the necessary discrimination, may hurry a new legislature into wrong changes. There lies a noble field of improvement before them, in rightly shifting the burden of taxes; in emancipating trade, and that without reserve or limitation; above all, in providing, amply and liberally providing, both for the Christian and literary education of the people. But there is a waywardness of innovation which might carry ruin and overthrow in its train, and of this they will have to beware. They should meddle not with the national debt, save in an equitable adjustment of the taxes; else they will pass a

sentence of confiscation on one set of proprietors to the enrichment of another set of proprietors, and these are exclusively the proprietors of the land. They should meddle not with the church, save to commute its tithes, and virtuously to control its patronage; else they will inflict an irreparable blow on the moral and literary wealth of the nation; and that to the relief and enlargement of no one class, but still of the landed proprietors. They should meddle not with the law of primogeniture; else they will institute a process, under which the state must wax feeble, and even our commercial greatness must disappear; our towns dwindling away, both in prosperity and in magnitude, and a numerous, but finally a wretched agrarian population rising up in their room. Lastly, they should meddle not, either with the monarchy or the peerage; for both a vigorous executive, and a certain *vis inertiæ* of hereditary prejudice, are as indispensable to a right politics, as both the helm and ballast of a vessel are indispensable to a right navigation. In a word, instead of demolishing the framework of any of our existent machinery, we would have them but to guide and to animate its movements. And it is precisely because we stand in dread, lest, through the stages of our future history, the sail should predominate over the ballast, so as to make the vessel of the state veer and vacillate with every wind of speculation, that we feel as if the national security were bound up, in our having more of an agrarian, and less of a mercantile parliament.

5. Still it is all important to remark, that the

internal changes which we have ventured to point out, will no more open up an indefinite career of economic enlargement and prosperity, than free trade can. They will afford a certain stretch for a somewhat larger population, but they will do no more; when we shall at length find a natural limit far more hopeless and impracticable than the artificial one, there being no reserve beyond it. In these circumstances—that is, when the means cannot be made larger for the population, it becomes abundantly obvious, that nothing can save us from the miseries of a straitened condition, but a population small enough for the means. The highway to this is education. And this is a precious use of the enlargements which are still before us, and by which the families of the land are translated for a time from extreme misery, into a state of comparative ease. They then become fitter subjects for education, than when sunk in the distress and desperation of abject poverty. When viewed in the light of absolute or ultimate resources, we have no great value, either for the removal of prohibitions from the corn trade, or for the removal of tithes and taxes from agriculture, or finally for emigration. But when these expedients are viewed in the relation of subserviency to the education of the people, (because they afford a temporary lightening of the pressure that is now upon their families; and along with this, a spirit, and a leisure, and a means for their moral and literary culture,) in this light they may prove of incalculable service to the good of humanity. But still the position remains, that it is education, and that only, wherein the whole posi-

tive efficiency lies for a permanent amelioration in the state of the lower orders. Education is the specific; and the other expedients are at best but the circumstances for a more fit and powerful ministration of it. But the whole effect of these expedients, when once put into operation, will speedily be exhausted. The favourable opportunities which they afford, last but for a season only. They are opportunities which cannot be recalled; and if not improved for the purposes of a general education, they will leave the state of the population more irrecoverable than before.

6. We cannot bid adieu to our argument, without making the strenuous avowal, that all our wishes, and all our partialities, are on the side of the common people. We should rejoice in a larger secondary, and a smaller disposable population; or, which is tantamount to this, in higher wages to the labourers, and lower rents to the landlords. But this cannot be effected, save by the people themselves—and that, not with violence on their part, or by any assertion, however successful, of a political equality with the other orders of the state. There is no other way of achieving for them a better economical condition, than by means of a more advantageous proportion between the food of the country and the number of its inhabitants; and no other way of securing this proportion, than by the growth of prudence and principle among themselves. It will be the aggregate effect of a higher taste, a higher intelligence, and, above all, a widespread Christianity, throughout the mass of the population; and thus, the most efficient ministers

of that gospel which opens to them the door of heaven, will be also the most efficient ministers of their temporal comfort and prosperity upon earth. Next to the salvation of their souls, one of our fondest aspirations in behalf of the general peasantry is, that they shall be admitted to a larger share of this world's abundance than now falls to their lot. But we feel assured that there is no method by which this can be wrested from the hands of the wealthier classes. It can only be won from them by the insensible growth of their own virtue. The triumph will be a glorious, but, to be effectual and enduring, it must be a pacific one; achieved, not on the field of blood, or amid the uproar of a furious and discordant politics. It will be a sure, but a silent victory—the fruit of a moral warfare, whose weapons are not carnal, but spiritual; and which shall at length come to a prosperous termination, not in strife and anarchy and commotion, but in showers of grace from on high upon the prayers and labours of the good. Each several clergyman, who labours piously and conscientiously in the home-walk of his own parish, helps forward this great consummation, till, by means of a universal blessing, peace and plenty will become alike universal throughout the families of a regenerated world.

APPENDIX.

Note A, page 55.—*On the Rent of Land.*

It is a signal error in a recent theory of rent, that the difference of quality in soils is the efficient cause of it. The difference between the produce returned for the same labour from a superior soil, and from the one last entered upon, is but the measure, and not the cause of rent. Had there been no gradation of soils, but had all been of the same uniform fertility with any given land which now affords rent, that land would have afforded rent still, and the same rent which it does at present. That land may yield rent, all which is necessary is, that, with the price obtained for its produce, the occupier can more than pay the wages of the labour and the profits of the capital bestowed upon it. It is the overplus which constitutes the rent of this land; and which would have been paid though there had been no land inferior to itself in existence. In affirming that it is the existence of this inferior land which originates the rent, there is a total misapprehension of what may be termed the real dynamics of the subject.

The process is this:—On land of a given quality, and anterior to its being rented, the produce, or its price, is shared between the workmen who laboured it, and the capitalist by whom it is occupied. But there are two reasons why this state of things might not be stationary—the one connected with the taste and choice of the workmen; the other, with the taste and choice of the capitalist. The workmen may be willing, rather than forego the pleasures of matrimony, to part with some other of their personal enjoyments, by entering soon upon this alliance; even though it should be so soon as that, through the medium of an increased population, they shall have at length to work for less wages than they might have otherwise preserved. And the capitalists may be willing, rather than forego the pleasures of accumulation, to part with some of their personal enjoyments, by sparing what they might have spent, and vesting the produce of their parsimony in business—even though, through the medium of an increased capital, they shall have to trade for less profit than they might otherwise have been able to sustain. Thus, the increase of capital, and the increase of population, are the real impellent causes, why the wages and profit, which wont to absorb the whole produce of land of a given quality, do not now absorb it. The competition between the labourers, now in greater number, on the one hand, and the more numerous or greater capitalists, on the other, is such, that less than the whole produce is now shared between them, and the difference, wherever land is appropriated, goes to rent. Farmers, in the existing

state of profit, and wages, and cultivation, are willing to pay this rent, for leave to settle on a land which formerly paid none; and should it so happen, that there exists inferior land beside that which is rented, and whose produce is just less than that of the other by the difference of the rent, farmers will be equally willing to settle on this inferior land, paying no rent at all. But, most assuredly, it was not the existence of the inferior, which originated a rent for the superior soil. It is not because farmers had descended to a worse and, that they are willing to pay rent for a better —but because they were willing to pay rent for the better, if they could have got it, they descended to the worse. The existence of the worse land, so far from originating a rent upon the better, prevented it from rising so rapidly as it would have done—because it afforded an outlet for the excess of population and capital; and thus slackened, for a time, their competition on the better land. The real cause of the rent, is this more strenuous competition of labourers and capitalists, now more numerous than before; and this cause, assigned by Dr Smith, ought not to be superseded, as if it were a distinct and different cause, by that which, in fact, is but a consequence from itself. This inversion of the truth, has led to vicious conclusions in political economy; and, as is the effect of every false principle, it has mystified the science.

Rent is not a creation by the will of the land lords, but a creation by the collective will of the capitalists and labourers. Wherever there is property in land, it is the unavoidable result of the

one class choosing to multiply, and the other choosing to accumulate, beyond the capacity of the higher soils to sustain them. It can only be done away with by the abolition of that property; or, in other words, by turning the country into a large common, and dissociating all the activities of individual interest and hope from the business of cultivation. Labour would cease to attach itself to any given portion of the territory, if there were no fence of property by which the fruits of this labour might be guarded. This property has been termed monopoly, and all the odium which attaches to monopoly has been cast upon its holders. But the truth is, that the landlords are altogether innocent of the rent, which has flowed in upon them *ab extra*, not at their own bidding, but at the bidding of those who complain of its oppressiveness. The employer of labour would have had his workmen at a higher wage; but another stepped forward and implored to be taken in at a lower wage, who, if refused, would have been in fact the more aggrieved sufferer, or at least the more helpless outcast of the two. The owner of the land would have let his farm at a lower rent; but, in the importunity of capitalists, higher rents were offered; and he, by refusing these, would in fact have disappointed the most eager among the competitors. The landlord is passive under this operation. He is the subject, and not the agent in it. The primary and the moving forces lie with the labourers on the one hand, and with the capitalists on the other; the former, through the medium of an increased population, having brought on a lower

wage than otherwise, by a necessity as irreversible as any law of nature; and the latter, through the medium of an increased capital, having by the same necessity brought on a lower profit than otherwise. The difference goes to rent. The complainers of it are themselves the makers of it. That the origination of rent should be rightly understood, is a thing of far mightier interest to the commonwealth, than the mere intellectual comprehension of a process. It is an incalculable loss to the working classes, when the real cause of their sufferings is misconceived. It bewilders the friends of humanity from the path of amelioration. And, besides, it provokes a thousand undeserved antipathies—being the fruitful cause of those many heart-burnings and jealousies by which society is so grievously distempered.

Rent is inseparable from property in land, and can only be abolished by all the fences and landmarks of property being swept away from our borders. The effect would be as instant as inevitable. The cultivation of the fields would be abandoned. The population would be broken up into straggling bands,—each prowling in quest of a share in the remaining subsistence for themselves; and, in the mutual contests of rapacity, they would anticipate, by deaths of violence, those still crueller deaths that would ensue in the fearful destitution which awaited them. Yet many would be left whom the sword had spared, but whom famine would not spare—that overwhelming calamity under which a whole nation might ultimately disappear. But a few miserable survivors would dispute the spon-

taneous fruits of the earth with the beasts of the field, who now multiplied and overran that land which had been desolated of its people. And so by a series, every step of which was marked with increasing wretchedness, the transition would at length be made to a thinly scattered tribe of hunters, on what before had been a peopled territory of industrious and cultivated men. Thus, on the abolition of this single law, the fairest and most civilized region of the globe, which at present sustains its millions of families, out of a fertility that now waves over its cultivated, because its appropriated acres, would, on the simple tie of appropriation being broken, lapse in a very few years into a frightful solitude, or, if not bereft of humanity altogether, would at last become as desolate and dreary as a North American wilderness.

We may here advert to a distinction between the produce of agriculture, and that of manufactures; or, as some would say, of all other manufactures than the manufacture of food. We think that it will go far to explain the peculiarity of rent, and repel at once the imputations which have been grounded thereupon, both against land and against landlords.

To assimilate the two, and confound all distinction between them, it is said that land is as much a machine, and the preparation of food as much a manufacture, as are the machines and the preparations of any other commodity. Now, without objecting to this, as being a thing of mere nomenclature, there remains one important reality by which to distinguish them. Food is the first ne-

cessary; other commodities are but second necessaries, or the luxuries of life. The increase of food will surely be followed up by an increase of population. The increase of luxuries, or even of second necessaries, will not always, will not necessarily be so followed up. Should corn become permanently more abundant than before, it would in the first instance fall in price; and a fall in such a large and essential branch of family expenditure, would, by translating men so much sooner into circumstances of ease and plenty, multiply and hasten on the marriages of labourers. A fall in the price of mere luxuries, such as carpets or pictures, or expensive wines, would have no such effect: and even a fall in the price of second necessaries, as of stockings for example, would have scarcely any effect, excepting through the medium of agriculture, and by its influence on cultivation in the way that we have already explained.* This is the reason why food cannot permanently remain as a drug in the market. It in fact creates a market for itself, which other manufactures do not. The peculiarity of the former commodity lies here, that though its supply may be overdone for a year or two, it cannot be overdone permanently, because there is a virtue in the commodity to extend, and that indefinitely, the demand for itself; so that, let the supply be kept up and augmented as it may, there will, in the necessity of things, spring up an equivalent demand by which to uphold its price in the market. The same thing cannot be said of other manufactured com-

* Chap. I. § 9.

modities—not even of second necessaries. The supply of shoes may be overdone year after year, greatly beyond the number of feet that wear them; because there is almost nothing in the mere production of these shoes to multiply the feet. But the supply of loaves cannot be so overdone year after year, because greatly beyond the number of mouths to eat them; for there is every thing in the production and increase of these loaves to multiply the mouths. It is true, that on that event the feet will be multiplied too; and with the increase of demand for food, there will also be an increase of demand for other things, or the products of other manufactures. But these manufactures have to wait the progress of agriculture, which itself has to wait for nothing but the development of its own energies and means. Agriculture has the command of both the terms which enter into the determination of price—immediately of the supply, and mediately, while rapidly, of the demand. Manufactures have but the command of one term; and they, by outdoing its progress, are exposed to the perpetual check of gluts, and bankruptcies, and losing speculations.

Now the rent of land is ascribed by Ricardo and others, to a blemish, whereof air and water are altogether free, and which, in consequence, yield no rent. In land there is a descending gradation in the quality of its soils; and the last of these which has been reclaimed, and which is the least fitted for the production of food, is alleged to be the cause of rent upon all the rest. But there is no such descending gradation in the quality of

air; no difference, for example, in the strength of its atmospherical pressure at different places, if on the same level, so as to make it more powerful at one place than another for giving impulse to machinery. And hence, according to the advocates of the new theory, there is no air rent. But the great, and indeed only efficient principle of rent is here overlooked. It is very true, that if, within the limits of some square miles on the earth's surface, there were air of tenfold property and power, then, all circumstances being equal, it would afford rent to the proprietors of such a small and favoured territory; and just because all the manufactured commodities that could be produced within limits so narrow, did not satisfy the actual demand for them. But grant a certain definite number of these square miles, along with a right local disposition of them, and rent would cease altogether, whatever the descending gradation was in the qualities of the remaining atmosphere. The truth is, that the demand for such commodities as are wrought off through the instrumentality of steam engines, is limited by the actual numbers of mankind; and, by means of a very few square miles of the requisite atmospherical pressure, the world could be super-saturated with these commodities; so that all the air over and above this, whether of equal or inferior quality to the former, would lie a useless drug in the hands of those who should seek a rent for the use of it. Whereas, not only is the demand for those commodities which are produced by farms, or land machines, enlarged with every eventual in-

crease in the numbers of mankind, but every addition to these commodities creates an addition to the numbers. The existence of a land, and the non-existence of an air rent, cannot, with propriety, be referred to any difference between the two elements, in respect of the gradation of their qualities. The difference is altogether resolvable into the nature or virtue of their respective products: the one of limited demand, being straitened within boundaries which itself cannot enlarge; the other widening the boundaries of its demand, and in the very proportion too of every new addition which is made to its own quantity. The simple cause of a land rent is, that the best farms, or the best machines for the manufacture of food, work off an excess of this commodity, over and above that share which the capitalists and labourers employed about it choose to put up with for themselves. That they should so choose, is owing to the competition of other capitalists and other labourers, whom the agriculture itself may be said to have brought into existence, and all of whom would be willing to occupy the best machines for the same share, leaving the excess to go in shape of rent to their proprietors. And they of course would be equally willing to be put into occupation of the inferior machines at inferior rents, or of the worst machine that can be wrought with a profit at no rent at all. Rent is not owing to a blemish, but to a superiority in land machines over all others. They, in the first instance, can do what the others cannot; not only satisfy the actual demand of present customers for their pro-

duce, but, by every addition to this produce, can proportionally add to the number of their customers. And the vast majority of them can do what the other species of machines do not—they can work off a greater amount of their own appropriate commodity, than will remunerate the capital and labour bestowed upon them; and thus leave a surplus, by which the industry is upheld that works off a thousand blessings to society.

It would remove the blemish ascribed to the great instrument for the preparation of food by our mercantile economists, (who have overlooked altogether the distinction, in point of virtue and effect, between the products of agriculture and those of manufactures,) could the business of the two, so unlike in their products, be likened in their processes. It is conceivable, that materials for the sustenance of human life could have been extracted, without let or limitation, by chemical manufacture, as by some treatment of decomposition and recomposition, for example, on the air which we breathe; and that the food of a differently constituted species could have been manufactured this way, in such abundance, that it would more than suffice for the alimenting of as many creatures as the earth could accommodate with room to stand upon. This were an economy of things more suited to the taste of those who have cast reproach upon land, because of its limited capacities; and it were curious to trace the effects of it. The whole of the accessible atmosphere would come, in the course of population, to be engrossed; and then, if the air were appropri-

ated, though with no gradation in its qualities, all that would be necessary for an air rent, were, that the food produced more than sustained the producers, and so afforded an excess that would go in the shape of revenue to its owners, and be expended by them on a disposable class of labourers. There would still be an air rent as at present. In this respect there would be no change; but there would be another and very important change, were the supposition realized of an indefinite capability in human art for the support of an indefinite population. Should it be absolutely and altogether without limits, the effect, however undeniable, is so very extraordinary, that we are almost afraid to mention it. There is a certain point, beyond which, if human beings were multiplied, a serious inconvenience must be felt, from the mere crowding and compression of their excessive numbers. This is obvious enough, should it take place within the limits of any separate locality; but it would be as surely and severely felt, if, in virtue of a production of food *ad libitum*, it did take place over the whole surface of the globe. The human species would then become as sordid and miserable, as those maggots appear to be who swarm on some mass of hideous putrefaction. The herrings that accumulate and condense in the western bays of our island, are said to push the outskirts of their shoal upon the beach. And better surely that there should be such a limitation in the powers of the land, and such an utter impotency in human art to multiply beyond a certain point the means of subsistence, than that the

great human shoal should be protruded at its extreme margin into the sea, and serve for food to the fishes there waiting to devour them. Rather than that this goodly earth of ours should be turned into a human ant-hill, is it better for man that he should have uncumbered fields—that he should have open and spacious solitudes to which he might make occasional escape from its more crowded receptacles, and might, on the ample domain of nature, company with nature's elements, and inhale their freshness. It is no interest, and ought to be no care of his, that the terrestrial space on which he walks should be so overpeopled; or that, for the mere sake of numbers, human beings should multiply to suffocation. The number of His derived and dependent family, is the care of Him who sitteth on high—and most nobly hath He provided for it. He who hath the command of infinity, hath enriched its mighty tracts with innumerable worlds; and, without overburdening the one we occupy, He finds accommodation and space for the innumerable myriads of creation. Better far, than that, from the vomitories of human mechanism, there should go forth indefinite subsistence for indefinite multitudes—better far, that this should have its fixed and impassable limits; and that men, with the glorious arch of heaven above their heads, and with an ample platform beneath them, should walk forth in largeness and liberty, the privileged denizens of nature.

There is an optimism in the actual constitution of the land, as in every thing else that has proceeded from the hand of the Almighty. Had its

fertility been limited to the maintenance of agrarian and secondary labourers, we should have had no disposable population; and neither science nor civilization would have arisen, to bless and to adorn the companionships of men. Had its fertility been unlimited, or could the powers of human art have extracted, without measure, the necessaries of life from any quarter of nature, the species would have lived in greater sordidness and misery still, on an earth laden by its wretched, because its overcrowded generations.

(Note B. page 86.)—*On Machinery.*

The impression against machinery has in it somewhat of the same subtle delusion which we have attempted to expose in the text. There is blended with it the imagination, that employment is creative of something else beside its own products. For the apprehension of many, and that not confined to the immediate sufferers, is, that with the introduction of every new method for abridging or superseding labour, there is the disappearance, not for a time only, but the permanent disappearance, of a resource to the labouring classes. The idea of their maintenance is strongly bound up with their occupation; and that, however remote, as in the case of buckle-makers, the product of their industry is from the materials of their food,—just as if, because buckles were to be no longer fabricated, the bread that wont to sus-

tain the fabricators, was to be no longer forthcoming; or as if the effect of such transitions was any other than merely to change the direction of industry, without impairing, in the least, those stores of human aliment, by which as great a number of industrious is sure to be upheld in circumstances of as great sufficiency as ever.

We dispute not the evils, though but the temporary evils, that result from those transitions of employment which are caused by machinery. They form a strong claim on the aid and tenderness of the benevolent, when families, in large masses, are, for a period, thrown out of employment; and what were still more healthful, they form a strong call on the manufacturing class of labourers more particularly, to cultivate those providential habits, by which, in virtue of their accumulations, they might be enabled to weather the seasons of suspension and change, to which every people of mechanic and highly artificial industry are so peculiarly exposed. Nothing is more to be deprecated among a people so peculiarly circumstanced, than those institutions which discharge them from the care of themselves, and from all prospective regard to their own necessities—the consequence of which is, that they are perpetually kept on the brink of destitution; and so are landed, in total helplessness, on those occasions when, either by a depression in trade, or by an abandonment of old methods of industry, thousands are reduced to a state of temporary idleness.

The vindication of machinery from the charge

of its adverse influence on the comforts of the poor, has been made to rest upon different grounds. It is not the true vindication, that the making of the machines opens so great a source of employment, that the making and working of them together take up as many hands as did the making of the commodities without the machines; for, in this case, there would be no abridgment of labour, and no advantage to master-manufacturers in setting up the machinery. And it is not a sufficient vindication, that, when an article is cheapened by machinery, the demand for it is so much enlarged, as still, in spite of the abridgment in labour, to require as many, if not more, labourers for its preparation as before;* for this, though true of many, perhaps of most trades, is not true of all. The ultimate and substantial vindication is, that, however the demand may vary or be lessened for particular kinds of work, the fund, out of which the wages come, is left unimpaired. The maintenance abides with us, whether the counterpart employment abides with us or not; and we may be very sure, that this maintenance will continue to be discharged on labourers, if not for the very work, at least for some kind of work or other. The distress and inconvenience of the change are evils; but they are the only evils.

Machinery does not impair the fund out of which industry is supported—neither does it lessen the amount of industry, but only alters the distri-

* This is the chief argument, very strikingly illustrated, of an admirable little treatise which has appeared lately, entitled, "The Working Man's Companion."

bution of it, and makes it more productive than before. In manufactures, the same quantity of a given article is furnished with less labour—but I continue to employ and support the same labour as before, either by extending my use of that article, or by allotting the sum which its now greater cheapness has left in my hands to the purchase of some other accommodations. The war against machinery, is a war against human enjoyments.

In agriculture, it is also the effect of machinery to have the same work accomplished with fewer hands. And this, as before, does not diminish the population, but only changes the distribution of them. It may transfer so many from the agricultural, to the disposable class. If fewer farm-labourers are required than before, proportionally to this, a larger surplus-produce will go to the landlord than before; for, just as the consumpt or expense on the farm is lessened, rent will be increased. These two effects meet and correspond —the augmentation of rent, with the augmentation in the number of the third class of labourers. One of the most important effects of agricultural improvement is, that it enlarges the disposable population.

But machinery, both in agriculture and manufactures, is attended with another effect of a still more vital character, and one on which most essentially depend the general comfort and sufficiency of our existing generation of labourers. We have already demonstrated, that the limit of cultivation is pushed forward by every invention which makes the labour of workmen, either in the agri-

cultural or secondary classes, more effective than before. If, in virtue of certain machinery, all that enters into the maintenance of an ordinary labourer can be prepared by fewer hands than formerly; this opens the way to a descent among poorer soils than formerly: and the more perfect such machinery is, the greater is the length to which agriculture is extended. Now, to that extreme limit the population have multiplied; and from that limit must the agriculture again recede, if such machinery shall be forcibly put down. It will affect the general supply of the population with food, just as a permanent visitation of blight or barrenness would; so that the vindication of machinery stands on much higher ground than merely its subservience to the enjoyments of the wealthy. It will re-act most calamitously on the very classes who are most outrageous in this cause—it will stint the supply of first necessaries, —if, in terror or subjection to the tyranny of the multitude, either our farming or manufacturing capitalists shall be forced to discontinue their machines and implements of labour.*

And the reflection here occurs, that in proportion to the high and artificial state of improvement which any country has reached, will the distress be; should law, and security, and social order, in that country, from whatever cause, whether by invasion from without or by anarchy from within, come to be suspended. With every step in the

* The thrashing machine, beside helping down the agriculture to inferior soils, has a still more direct influence on the supply of food, by the more entire separation which it effects of the grain from the straw.

progress of such improvement, has there been an onward step in the cultivation of the soil; till, corresponding to its high-wrought and extreme husbandry, the land has been filled with an extreme population. But without the utmost protection and deference to the rights of property, and confidence in distant returns on the outlays of capital, and safety from that violence which never comes in a shape so formidable to the resources of the nation, as when directed against the apparatus of our farms—such a high style of husbandry cannot possibly be upholden. The effect will be most tremendous; and far more severe than in a land of coarser husbandry, which in its days of peace has not been elaborated forward to its extreme resources, and so, in its days of warfare or misrule, will not be thrown backward upon that extreme necessity, to which every territory that is at once fully cultivated and fully peopled, would, in these circumstances, be most certainly exposed. This consideration should operate powerfully at present, in the fearful conflict that is now at work between the two elements of liberty and order. Were there to be a season of insurrectionary violence in these islands, we believe, on the principle which we have just stated, that England would suffer more than Ireland; and that, in point of intense and intolerable wretchedness throughout its families, it might then be said, "There has been no such distress in any land, or such wrath upon any people." Amid the contests of partisanship, the high and great principle should never be lost sight of on either side; that, in the preservation of

justice, and authority, and good government, no country in the world has so mighty a stake as our own; and that, even by the partial relaxation, but still more by the subversion of these, will the comfort of no other people, and the prosperity of no other land, experience so calamitous an overthrow.

(Note C. pages 115, 160.)—*On Home-Colonization.*

There are very few countries which do not present large tracts of land, on which the experiment of home-colonization may be tried. The question then is, Why are they at present unoccupied? There can be no doubt, that in such a country of law, and security, and enterprise as our own, they would have been cultivated, could they, at the existing rate of profit, have remunerated the farmers. This is an object which may, with all safety, be left to the guidance of personal interest, and to the sharp-sighted intelligence of men calculating and scheming for their own individual advantage. It is not the want of capital which accounts for the non-cultivation of land in any country teeming with capital like our own; but an apprehension, either on the part of occupiers or of money-lenders, that if capital were embarked on the cultivation, it would not be returned with an adequate profit, and perhaps even be lost partially or altogether. And if individuals would find it a losing speculation, we have no reason to believe that

corporations, still less the largest corporation of all, the government, would find it a safe one. We may rest assured, that, down to such land as will barely remunerate the outlay and expenses of its cultivation, the capital in the hands of individuals has not only reached this limit, but is pressing upon it closely, and is even wasting itself on vain attempts to pass beyond it. And so we may safely assume, that in any old country, which has long been in favourable circumstances of peace, and civilization, and order, for the development of its natural resources, if land hitherto uncultivated has been pitched upon for the purpose of home-colonization, it is land of a lower fertility than what can repay the expenses of its own husbandry with a fair profit to the cultivator.

But passing over the element of profit, which forms but an inconsiderable fraction of the whole return, it may be said of the soil which is entered by home-colonization, that it is not able to feed its agricultural labourers with their secondaries; and that, therefore, a full complement of labourers cannot be applied to such land, without a lessening of the disposable population. Not but that, in country parishes, a sufficient, an overflowing number of agrarian workmen might be had for the enterprise; but, supported as it must be by a tax, the produce of which formerly went to the purchase of luxuries, there of consequence must eventually be so many of the disposable population thrown out of employment. Still, in spite of this circumstance, there would be a relief afforded upon the whole by such a measure, to the general

pressure under which the community laboured from the excess of its own numbers. For the disposable labourers thrown out of employment would form but a fraction, and in the first instance it might be a small fraction, of the whole number enlisted in the undertaking. If the land they began with yielded subsistence for nine-tenths of the essential labourers connected with it, then, on the supposition of a hundred men being employed, only ten would need to be transferred from the disposable class to the agricultural or secondary; and the return yielded would form a clear addition, in the food of ninety labourers, to the previous means of subsistence in the land. This number of idlers would be translated, not into what can rightly be termed profitable employment, but into employment, that, with the help of a tax providing for one-tenth of their maintenance, enables them to make out and complete the whole of it. The advantage of such a scheme over that of all other charity-work, is quite obvious. The forcing of a manufacture beyond its natural limit, produces no food; and by edging in, as it were, to a share of the pre-existent food, so many of the superfluous population, it but condemns the whole population, each to a scantier portion than before. The forcing of agriculture beyond its natural limit, does create a clear addition to the food of the country; and if carried to a great extent, it may for a season, and before the population have had time to overtake it, yield, in the cheapening of the first necessaries of life, a sensible relief to the community at large.

This holds forth an inviting outset for the scheme; but it is well to mark its progress, and, if indefinitely carried forward, the final result of it. Once the natural limit is broken, and the *deficient* soils are entered on, the cultivation cannot proceed downwards, but by an increasing tax on the wealthy, and larger and larger drafts on the disposable population. At each successive descent, a temporary relief may be experienced; but with the same recklessness and relaxation of habit on the part of labourers, the pressure of a redundancy in our numbers will ever and anon recur with the same intensity and feeling of straitness as before. We should at length touch on the ultimate and impassable boundary of such a process, when, for the purpose of upholding it, the wealthy had to be taxed till they were reduced to the necessaries of life, and the last man of the disposable population to be withdrawn, in order to make out the requisite labour on the last, and therefore most deficient soils which had been entered on. We should then be landed in a more populous nation, yet not have a single disposable individual within its confines. Each would labour for his own essential maintenance; and all the interest or enjoyment connected with the services of a disposable population, behoved to be abandoned. This is what may be termed the extreme possibility of the system; but it would never be realized. It would surely break up, and that long anterior to such a consummation. Landlords, subject to an indefinite and ever-growing taxation, would at length cease to feel an interest in the administration of

their own property. They would not continue to be the receivers of rents, when this was so nearly tantamount to being the mere organs of transmission, through whom the surplus produce of the superior found its way to the deficient soils, and was there absorbed in the expenses of a profitless and ungrateful cultivation. It is fearful to contemplate the issues, after that property had thus been undermined, and the ancient ties had been dissevered which connected the soil with its original possessors. The occupiers of the barren, might then turn in fierceness to the occupiers of the fertile land, on the wonted channel of conveyance, in the person of the landlord, having at length given way. A lax sense, or an imperfect arrangement of property, in a country yet but thinly inhabited, and of unbroken capabilities, is still so prolific of disorder, as to verify the maxim, that a state of nature is a state of war; but this disorder must be thickened and aggravated tenfold, should the same dissolution take place in a country of teeming population, and whose very deserts now swarmed with a host of colonized paupers that had overflown the natural limits of the agriculture. In the scramble that ensues, we shall perhaps have to witness another of those dread calamities which may be awaiting us, and which we fear nothing will avert, but a timely moral and Christian education of the people, along with the gradual abandonment of certain inveterate errors which have been suffered to distemper the social economy of our land.

Such being the natural outgoings of the system

of home-colonization, this alternative should be carefully weighed at the commencement of it,—Whether it is better that the people should, by a right preventive check on their own number, have room and sufficiency within the natural limit of the agriculture, or should be encouraged to multiply beyond that limit by a scheme, the proposal of which has met with great acceptance from many patriots and philanthropists in our day? It is utterly a vain hope, that we shall ever, by means of such settlements, escape from the pressure of a redundant population; and a momentary slackening of the pressure is the most that we can expect from it. And this descent among the deficient soils to make room for a surplus population, is sure to be accompanied by a descent in the circumstances of the general population. The very circumstance of the soils being deficient, implies the necessity of a charitable intervention, in order to complete the maintenance of those who are there colonized. But, generally speaking, when the hand of charity is stretched forth, and more especially in behalf of a whole multitude, it is not for the purpose of upholding them in that state of average sufficiency which obtains among labourers, but only for the purpose of saving them from starvation; not to keep them in comfort, but to keep them in existence. These home-colonists, if the system be carried to any sensible extent, will not be on the footing of independent labourers earning a respectable wage, but on the footing rather of paupers, or the dependants of a vestry, who have their supplementary allowances doled

out to them, with that niggardly reluctance which usually marks the proceedings of an organized system of relief. Here, then, we have a population encouraged and virtually called into being, who are constrained by their situation to live beneath the par of human comfort and subsistence, and whose very presence in the land will act as an incubus with overhanging pressure on the general condition of our peasantry. They form a body of reserve, from whom masters may indefinitely draw, in every question of wages between themselves and their servants; and by means of whom, therefore, they can, as in a market overstocked with labour, bring down indefinitely its remuneration. We hold then, in addition to every other evil of the system, that, once it is entered on and continues to be extended, the working classes will be sealed thereby to irrecoverable degradation. It is at its outset, then, that every enlightened philanthropist should take his stand, and at once proclaim, that nothing will serve the exigencies of a land brought to such extremity as this, but a vigorous application of moral causes. We hold it as being of inestimable benefit to all the classes of society, that cultivation should stop with the last land which yields a profit to the farmer, after having fed both its direct and secondary labourers. The momentous question is, Shall we step beyond this limit, or keep within it? By the former, we enter on a headlong process of degradation, through which we obtain, no doubt, a larger, but withal a more wretched peasantry. By the latter, we restrict ourselves to a smaller produce, and a smaller

population, keeping the disposable class entire, but leaving it possible, by indefinite moral and literary cultivation, indefinitely to raise the comfort and condition of all the classes. There is a beautiful harmony here, between the interest of the landed proprietors and the interest of the general community. Landlords, on the one hand, would be left in full possession of their rents, and in full command of the disposable population. The general population, on the other, would be retained within the boundaries of a soil, fully able, even at its worst extreme, to maintain the families who laboured it. It is a big alternative; and the most opposite results are suspended on it. Either the population would be restrained within the natural limits of the agriculture, and might be raised by moral culture into higher and higher states of sufficiency; in which case the rent of landlords would be kept up, or if encroached on at all, (and we should rejoice in such an encroachment,) it would be by the higher wage of a now improved and independent peasantry. Or this rent would be wrested from them by the necessities of a pauper peasantry; in which case there would, along with a letting down of the revenue of the landlords, be a letting forth of the population on deficient soils; and so, a landing both of the higher and lower classes of society in one common degradation.

This process is as good as already entered upon in England. The pauperism of that country may be regarded, in certain of its modifications, as a method of home-colonization in disguise. In as

far as the wages are paid out of the poor's rate, in so far may the farmer be induced to bring down his agriculture among soils that cannot repay the natural expenses of their husbandry. Of course, he cannot afford to do this without paying a less rent to the landlord than he could have otherwise afforded; and indeed, in many districts of England where the redundancy of people has been most severely felt, there has been a partial remission of the rent, for the express purpose of enabling the farmer to take the parochial applicants into employment. The work of his farm may, by this time, have been fully engrossed up to the limit of that agriculture which can remunerate itself. But better it is to have a partial return from the labour of these supernumeraries, than no return at all. Better keep them in employment, though it should yield but a fraction of their maintenance, than keep them in total idleness. Now this is the virtual commencement of a scheme of home-colonization, and offers indeed a distinct exemplification of its several parts and consequences. The people who are thus admitted to country labour, can only find occupancy among those extremes of cultivation, where the additional produce is unable to maintain the additional men who have forced themselves into service. They cannot raise enough for their own support, to complete which, rents are encroached upon; or, in other words, an agrarian population is multiplied and upheld at the expense of the fund for the support of the disposable population. From this quarter then, from towns where employment will languish,

may we expect an additional invasion on the already overpeopled land; and therefore upon that part of it which lies beyond the natural limit of cultivation. It is fearful to contemplate the result, if the present system of England shall be longer persevered in. There is nothing more likely to bring on a crisis, than this unnatural accumulation of people; and nothing more certain to aggravate its miseries and horrors, when it shall come to be realized. If, during a period of turbulence and disorder, the agriculture shall be at all relaxed, (and what more likely, from the loosened and lessened interest of the administrators of landed property, in estates that become every year less valuable and more vexatious to them?) or if, during the same period, the now artificial economy of parish management shall be suspended, so that either the produce shall be diminished, or the existing distribution of it shall be deranged—we cannot imagine a more fearful perspective than the famine, and the mutual ferocity, and all the evils of anarchy, which will then be let loose upon our suffering families. There are clearly elements at work towards such a consummation; and far more imperative therefore, than the necessity for a reform in the politics, is the urgent necessity for a reform in the economics of England. The one opens a much higher walk than the other, for the wisdom and benevolence of true patriotism. In younger countries there may, by an enlargement of means to the population, be a comparative ease and tranquillity for centuries to come. In a country, brought as ours near to

the uttermost verge of its resources, the only effectual and lasting remedy is, to check the advances of the population upon the means. And nothing, we repeat, is competent to such an effect, but a gradual abolition of the poor's laws, along with the instant and vigorous application of moral causes. Village schools, and well-served churches, and zealous parish ministrations, and a universal system of popular education, into which the lessons of the gospel of Jesus Christ largely and pervadingly enter,—these form the main elements or means of our nation's peace, and our nation's greatness.

(Note D. page 140.)—*On the National Debt.*

There is one conclusion from the argument in the text, which appears to us inevitable; and which, paradoxical as it may appear, we hold to be amply borne out both by reason and experience.* We can perceive no flaw in the deduction, should it only be granted that the capital displaced from business by loans is repaired, not by the parsimony of capitalists, but by the privation of customers—an inference that comes direct from the most elementary principles in political economy;

* We subjoined the greater part of this argument some years ago to a former work, entituled "The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns;" but the extraordinary nature of the conclusion, and its immense practical importance, if true, as being decisive, we would not only say of the vital impolicy, but of the prodigious infatuation, nay, insanity of the funding system, have led us to insert it in this place.

and which is abundantly countenanced by the phenomena, both of the high profit that takes place in seasons of borrowing, as indicated by the low price of stocks, and by the obvious resuscitation of the withdrawn capital which must take place every year, as indicated by the unimpaired sufficiency of capital for all mercantile and agricultural concerns.

The views, then, presented in the text, on the subject of capital, have suggested to us the following important practical inference, in regard to the policy of the funding system.

The sum borrowed by government is withdrawn from commerce and manufactures, and must, to the extent of its power in producing commodities, and bringing them to market, lessen the supply of these commodities.

The price of these commodities rises in consequence, and to such a degree, too, that the sum will be replaced; so that, in the course of a little time, the capital, restored to what it was by the operation of the now higher profit, will be as fully commensurate to the business of the country as before, when profits will again sink to their wonted level.

But, should the same sum be borrowed next year, the same deficiency of capital will occasion another year of deficient supply, and of those consequent higher prices and profits which are the unavoidable result of it. The deficiency will again be filled up as before; and it will not be for the want of a capital to borrow from, that government shall be arrested in this career, however much it

may feel itself arrested by the insufficiency of the taxes necessary to defray the interest of the increasing debt.

There might, however, be successive yearly borrowings for a considerable time; and in this way, government has provided itself with means, over and above its annual revenue, for defraying the expense of our lengthened wars. If there be truth in our reasoning on the subject of capital, this will continue to act upon prices and profits just as long as the practice of borrowing lasts. There will be as great a sum replaced every year, as shall both uphold the capital that is actually vested in business, and, over and above this, shall afford to government a loan, equal to that of the preceding year. But should the loan not be wanted, should the sum that government wont to absorb in this way not find its usual investiture, it will seek an investiture in trade. It will, in fact, restore the trading and manufacturing capital to the state in which it would have been, had government not made these yearly abstractions from it; and, with the now larger capital, there will be a fall of prices and profits.

The important deduction to be made from this argument is, that when government defrays any of its expenses by borrowing, it does so by a method which is doubly more burdensome to the country, than when it defrays the expense by taxes raised within the year.

Should government borrow twenty millions for the exigencies of the current year, there are, in that year, twenty millions' worth less of commodi-

ties brought to the general market than there would otherwise have been. But there is nothing in this transaction between government and so many of the capitalists of the nation, that can affect either the power or the inclination of buyers to purchase. There is as effective a demand as before, but a diminished supply—the same expenditure on the part of customers, but, on the whole, twenty millions' worth less of enjoyment in return for it.

Had government, instead of borrowing, raised the twenty millions by additional taxes, the community, no doubt, would have had twenty millions less to spend; but they would not have had the high prices to encounter, which are consequent on those abstractions of capital produced by government-loans. It is quite the same thing, whether the community shall go to market with the usual amount of money for purchases, but with prices raised to the extent of twenty millions; or shall go to market with twenty millions less of money, but with the usual prices. In either way, it suffers the loss of twenty millions' worth of enjoyment; or, in other words, it suffers no greater loss by being taxed to the extent of twenty millions, than it does by this sum being borrowed from the money-holders or capitalists of the land.

Under the borrowing system, the public are subjected, through the medium of higher prices, to the expense of repairing deficiencies, occasioned by government-loans, in the capital of the nation. The public could as easily, through the medium of higher taxes, have yielded, direct to government,

the whole amount of the sums borrowed. The ability, on the part of the nation, to keep up the capital, in spite of the repeated drafts made upon it by borrowing, indicates the same ability to withstand equal drafts, if made upon it by immediate taxation. The whole sum borrowed for any year, though primarily and ostensibly raised from the money-holders, is in fact raised from the public—and raised, too, *within the year*. The burden could have been as easily borne, if the whole sum borrowed had been raised within the year by a direct levy. It makes no real difference, whether bereft of a given amount of enjoyment by means of higher prices or higher taxes.

It is thus that the national debt has all been virtually paid once, and yet remains to be paid over again—paid, in the first instance, as it was contracted, by the high prices consequent on a deficient capital; and to be paid, in the second instance, to the actual creditors, either by a liquidation of the principal, or by a perpetual interest.

The hardship on the nation would not have been greater, though all the money borrowed had been raised by taxation, than the hardship actually borne *at the time* when the loans were contracted. And there is not a period of our by-gone history, even though the years of profusest expenditure should be fixed upon, in which we were not just as able to render, in additional taxes, all the sums that were raised by borrowing, as we were able to support the augmented prices consequent upon the loans; and by which, in fact, the whole amount of these loans was drawn from the community, to

repair the abstractions which had been made upon the capital.

The difference, then, between the system of raising money by loans, and that of providing for all the expenses by taxation, is that, while in both ways the same pressure is made *at the time* on the comfort of families, in the former way there is the formation and growth of a great national mortgage, which remains to oppress and enfeeble the country. In either way, the state may obtain exactly the same supplies; but, in the former way, it obtains them at a double expense to the nation. The present burden is just as heavy in the one way as in the other; over and above which, there is a prospective burden equal to the present, which the system of borrowing leaves behind it.

Notwithstanding, however, loans are more popular than taxes, and just because their double mischief is disguised. The people do not feel that government are taking the money out of their pockets by borrowing, though this is virtually done, and at the time too, in the shape of higher prices, if not in the shape of higher taxes. They think that a loan only entails a distant calamity, although the full weight of it is felt in a present calamity. But this is not perceived, and blindness reconciles them to a sore infatuation.

To conclude, then; the whole sum wanted for the service of the year should be raised by taxation, and the expedient of a loan should never be resorted to. Besides the economic argument for this policy, which appears to us irresistible, we hold the very unpopularity of it to be an addi-

tional recommendation. It would restrain the public appetite for war. Government would not enter so readily upon any rash or wanton undertaking, if the whole expense of it were not only actually felt, but consciously felt in taxes palpably imposed for the purpose of defraying it. A more cautious and pacific spirit would thenceforth actuate the councils of the nation.

Mr Tooke, in his able disquisition upon high and low prices, seems not to have fully adverted to the distinction in point of effect, between a war expenditure that is defrayed wholly by taxes, and a war expenditure that is defrayed partly by loans. He is right in asserting, that the money which is in the hands of capitalists, is as much spent as would be the same money in the hands of government; and that, therefore, when transferred from the one to the other, there is no greater demand thereby created to bear on the general market, and so to raise prices. But it should be considered, that though such a transference gives rise to no greater demand, it gives rise to a less supply; and that this will raise prices just as effectually. The twenty millions borrowed by government from so many of our capitalists, might all have been spent by the latter within the year, in the outlays of their business; and so have told as effectually on general prices, as the same sum spent by government. But the borrowing has caused a cessation of this business, insomuch that there are twenty millions' worth less of commodities brought to market, for the supply of the families of the land. Meanwhile, their demand

for these commodities is the same, and the money which they bring to purchase them is the same; and so the price rises to such a degree, that they must be satisfied with twenty millions' worth less of comforts than they would have had, had no such borrowing taken place. It would have been no greater hardship on the community, if, taxed to the extent of the whole loan, they had gone with twenty millions less of money to market, when the prices were not exposed to the influence of the borrowing system in raising them.

That profits are raised by the government loans, seems palpably enough indicated by the effect of these loans on the price of stocks. It is not any apprehension for the security of government, that can account for the whole depression of the funds, at the period of large and frequent loans to meet the exigencies of a war. It arises in great part from the drafts which are made on the capital of the nation, and from the necessary effect which the consequent diminished supply has upon prices and profits. The descent from 90 to 50 in the three per cent. consols, during a great part of the French wars, argues a high rate of profit throughout the whole of that period. So long as it lasted, the community were exposed to all the higher prices for the various articles of comfort; and we have no doubt, that, by this difference of price alone, the whole sums borrowed, enormous as they were, actually passed from their hands to replace the deficiencies of the capital. The sum of five hundred millions then added to our national debt, was paid away by the people in

higher prices; and better far it would have been, if, instead of this, it had been paid away by them in higher taxes. It was actually paid, yet still remains an incubus upon the nation.

And the conclusion is not essentially different, although the supplies of government should be raised, in the first instance, by the pure operation of credit, rather than by actual borrowing. Suppose, for example, that a sum so large as twenty millions should be raised within the year, in the shape of exchequer bills. There is, in this case, no abstraction of monied capital from any department of business, and therefore no raising of general prices from this cause. But there is an increase of prices, and to the same extent of twenty millions too, by another cause; that is, if not by a diminution of the money that formerly went to the side of production, at least by an increase of the money that now goes to the side of demand. The truth is, that, by the device in question, no less than an additional twenty millions are brought to bear on an aggregate produce of the same pecuniary cost as before. Through the currency and reception of these bills, a given cost of produce meets with twenty millions more in the market than it otherwise would have done, and average or general prices rise to that amount. Government brings the whole force of this extra competition to raise the price of that which cost but the same as formerly; and the effect of this extravagance on its part, is precisely the same with that of a similar extravagance on the part of landlords, who may be conceived to spend collectively, in

one year, twenty millions more than their income. There is a consequent rise of prices to this amount, which goes to enrich merchants and manufacturers, and to constitute them either the creditors of government, who, in the act of funding their bills, bring a permanent mortgage upon the nation—or the creditors of landed proprietors, whose expenditure in like manner brings a mortgage upon their estates. In either case, the whole effect is a rise of prices; and not a reduction, but a rotation of property.

There is still a third way in which this matter can proceed; and it is worthy of being noticed, because of the important explanation on another subject to which it is subservient. The monied capital vested in the actual business of the country, might be rated, as before, at a hundred millions; and be returned, in ordinary times, by the sum of a hundred and ten millions. If reduced to eighty millions by a government loan, we have already seen, how, in one revolution of the economic cycle, it might be fully restored by the operation of a diminished supply upon prices. But the likelihood is, that the remaining capitalists of eighty millions may not confine their operations to what they can barely do with their own proper capital. They may superadd the power of credit to that of capital, which, in the circumstances supposed, they can do with all the greater safety, because of the large return of a hundred and ten millions to eighty millions that is now awaiting them. Let us imagine, then, that in virtue of being trusted to the extent of ten millions, they

can lay out ninety instead of eighty millions on the extension of their business. This would reduce their profits for that year, from thirty to twenty millions; making, therefore, the reparation of the capital a slower process than it might otherwise have been. The sum of ten millions, by which their profits would have been augmented, has passed from them, and taken some other direction, which remains to be inquired into.

It seems obvious enough, then, that as by this device of credit they have brought ninety instead of eighty millions to bear on the outlays of their business, the money price of all which they had to purchase must have risen in this proportion. The chief of these purchases must be raw materials and labour. Confining ourselves to the latter, it may be stated as a general position,—That when the operations of trade are extended by credit, the money price of labour rises. In the particular instance before us, it will do so unquestionably. The mere loan of twenty millions to government, will have no effect in this way; for though they are thereby vested with an additional command to that extent over the labour market, which they will of course make use of in adding to their naval and military establishments, yet the power of the capitalists from whom they have borrowed this sum is as much diminished; so that still, after the transaction, the joint demand of the two parties for the services of men, may be measured by the same sum, as the entire demand of the capitalists before that the borrowing took place. But should these capitalists, by means of

credit, bring ninety millions instead of eighty to bear upon the market—then, with the help of the twenty millions now in the hands of government, a hundred and ten millions, in the place of a hundred, will go to the purchase of service and materials together, and so raise in that proportion the money price of both of them. And should government, by such a measure as the issuing of exchequer bills, add to the effect of these doings the operation of a pure credit on their side—there may, between the parties, be a hundred and twenty, or a hundred and thirty millions, instead of a hundred expended within the year, and that chiefly in hiring the services of men. A war, whose expenses were defrayed by taxation within the year, might have no such effect; but the various expedients so much resorted to, of loan and anticipation, have all of them the obvious and certain effect of advancing, for the time, the money price of labour.

Now this advance in the money price of labour, must, we think, tell directly on the money price of all that is purchased by labourers. More especially will it have the effect of raising the money price of grain—that being a first necessary of life. Not that it will necessarily give them a greater command over this prime article of subsistence—for, with only a given quantity of corn in the market, a mere advance of nominal wages can have no effect in sharing it out more liberally to the population. Still, however, it will have effect on the nominal or money price of corn. If all the buyers of an article have more to give for

it than usual, that more will be given. There may not, in consequence, be the acquisition of a greater share by each; but there will, at least, be an endeavour after it, which is quite enough for raising the money price to all. Mr Tooke, the able and distinguished author of the "Essay on High and Low Prices," has, we think, succeeded in showing, that the frequent scarcities of that season, go far to account for the high price of corn during the time of the French war. But we have no doubt that the war itself had a share in it. The greater waste and consumption of provisions in the shape of government stores for a navy or army, than by the same number of men in the pacific walks of life, would of itself be an item of no inconsiderable influence—particularly, as a very slight increase of demand tells more powerfully on the price of an article of main necessity, than it does in the case of all other commodities. But the chief effect of war, we apprehend, in raising the money price of agricultural produce, stands connected with the explanation which we have just given—an explanation into which we should not have entered, but for the light which it seems to cast on another interesting phenomenon that we shall now advert to with all brevity.

The question is, How comes it, that during a season of high money prices, there should always a stretch take place in the cultivation of land? This was remarkably exemplified during the last war with France, at which time many a before out-field territory was reclaimed, and, generally speaking,

a more thorough cultivation spread itself over the island at large. Now it appears to have all the certainty of an axiom, that no land can be entered on agriculturally, unless the produce yielded in return can feed the agricultural population and their secondaries, besides yielding a profit to the farmer. But we have every reason to believe, that profit was higher throughout that whole season of large borrowings and low prices of stocks, than at ordinary periods; and, in as far as this element is concerned, the cultivation should have been straitened, rather than enlarged; whereas it was the opposite process which took place, and which calls for explanation.

Certain it is, that a higher money price for corn can have no effect on what may be called the natural barrier of cultivation. It cannot make the land that is beyond, more fertile or less difficult to labour than before. It cannot impart to it the capacity of feeding more than its own agricultural workmen and their secondaries, if it wanted this capacity in times past; and, if it remain short of this, it is short of the possibility of being cultivated with a profit. Under all conceivable changes in the value of our denominations and our coins, there is still the stubborn necessity for the direct and indirect labourers on any given territory, being, at the very least, fed from the produce of it. One can imagine a fall of substantial wages, in which case the men would either be worse fed, or be willing to put up with fewer of the second necessaries than before. This would admit a stretch in the cultivation. But it is doubtful whether, on

the whole, labourers were worse off during the war than in ordinary times. With the higher prices, there were also higher money wages; and it was, in fact, a rise in the money price of labour which, partly at least, effected a rise in the money price of food. So that, with both the higher profits and the higher wages of that period—which, of themselves, ought to have contracted the agriculture—it is extraordinary, and requires explanation, that still the agriculture should have been extended.

We do not see how a high money price of corn should extend cultivation, if all the expenses of the husbandry, as estimated in money, rose in the same proportion. If the profit of agriculture kept as high, and, still more, if it rose higher than usual; and if the direct and indirect labourers obtained the same share of the produce as food to themselves—then, but for one circumstance, there does not appear the possibility of cultivation being extended, merely because money prices have risen. That one circumstance, which applies more to Britain than any other country, is taxation—and a taxation affecting, in a material degree, the expense of agricultural operations. The truth is, that, in virtue of such taxation, the last land has more to do than merely to feed the direct and secondary labourers, beside yielding a profit to the farmer. Over and above these, the produce which is drawn from it goes to feed an additional population in the employ and service of government. It is taxation, as at present conducted, which forces this destination upon it. There are still taxes on many of the second necessaries of life; and taxes which

make the implements and whole apparatus of farm labour more expensive than otherwise. But a high money price of corn does not add to the pecuniary amount of these taxes; and this alone will suffice to account for the additional scope and outlet which that price allows to husbandry. For the sake of illustration, let us conceive, that, when grain is at the average price, a hundred pounds' worth, raised from the last land, is divided in this proportion—that sixty pounds defray the natural expenses of the husbandry, and thirty pounds more the taxes; leaving a profit of ten pounds to the farmer. Then let the money price rise from a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds, and even though the natural expenses should rise in the same proportion, yet, with the taxes, as estimated in money, being stationary, there would ample encouragement be afforded for the extension of the culture among the inferior soils. For, on the supposition now made, the natural expenses would rise to ninety pounds, which, with the taxes still at thirty, would leave no less than a profit of thirty pounds—or a three times greater profit to the farmer than usual. But he could afford to cultivate at a profit much inferior to this; and therefore can afford, and will feel encouraged, to enter on the cultivation of inferior soils.

And we may now see how it is, that, in the time of war, in as far as its expenses are defrayed, not by taxes, but by loans, there should often be such a general heyday feeling of prosperity throughout the land. The truth is, that a mere increase in his money receipts, will give one a certain sense of

prosperity, or of getting on in the world—though, in virtue of a proportional rise in money prices, he may have no greater command than before over the enjoyments of life. A general rise in money rents and wages, and withal, in profits, will beget the fancy, and even the sensation of prosperity, among the three great classes of society—the feverish exhilaration of high health, without the sound or entire possession of it. Meanwhile, and contemporaneously with this great nominal and apparent increase in the means of the general community, there must, in counterpart to the higher prices and profits of such a season, fall a real weight of suffering, without disguise and without palliation, somewhere. And it is by the mere money annuitants of all classes, that the pressure is chiefly felt—who draw their stated income, and, with the same nominal revenue as before, have to encounter that excess of prices which we ascribe to the operation of the funding system; and by which we hold that its immense levies are drawn, even at the time, or within the year, in the shape of higher prices, from the pockets of the population—as well as laid, in the shape of a permanent mortgage, on the country.

If our reasoning be valid on the effects that take place during the contraction of the national debt, it will further serve to establish the converse effects that would take place during its repayment. By the one process, capital was turned into expenditure; and there instantly ensued high profits and prices to repair the deficiency. By the other process, expenditure would be turned into capital;

and there would as instantly ensue low profits, or rather prices beneath prime cost, and consequent losing speculations to absorb the superfluity. If, when twenty millions were borrowed, the public had to pay these twenty millions in higher prices; then, should these twenty millions be repaid by a tax, that tax would be again paid back to the public in lower prices. Should government establish a property tax, and apply its produce wholly to the liquidation of the national debt, it would bear far more lightly on the community than they are at all aware of. To them it might bear the semblance, but not the reality of distress. The great distress would be among merchants and manufacturers, from the glut of capital. As by the one process, a monied interest was formed, tantamount to the whole value of the national debt; so, by the opposite process, the whole of this immense interest would be swept away. It would afford the most impressive exemplification possible to all our views on the subject of capital. Losses and bankruptcies innumerable, would follow in the train of this great regurgitation. The newly-created capital would seek every where, but in vain, for a profitable investiture. It would force its way into Ireland and more distant places; and might be the means of a temporary relief from the pressure of our excessive population, both by its reflux on our agriculture at home, and by the impulse it would give to schemes and undertakings of emigration abroad. Our landlords, the ultimate payers of taxes, are not aware of the easy terms on which they might get quit of the mortgage which oppresses them.

It comes upon them as a burden at the first, after they had already borne it in high prices. They might cast off the burden at their pleasure; and that, not by a dishonest cancelment of the debt, but by the literal, honest, and full repayment of it. The heavy taxation, while it lasted, would be compensated by the low prices; and permanent relief from the interest of the national debt would be obtained, without the expense of a sacrifice.

There is only one qualification that we can think of, in any way affecting these conclusions on the subject of the national debt. In as far as the money is lent by foreigners, there is no abstraction of capital from the business of the country, and no consequent raising of prices. In as far as it is repaid to foreigners, there is no addition made to the capital within the country, and no consequent lowering of prices. And the same may be said of all those repayments which, instead of being vested either in the home or in the return foreign trade, are carried forth of the land on any enterprise of colonization. Bating these, there would be a mighty lowering in the price of all those articles, on the production of which there was so much more of capital, and in the purchase of which there was so much less of expenditure than before—such a lowering, in fact, as would very nearly, if not fully, compensate for the extraordinary taxation, by means of which the liquidation of the debt is effected.

Note E. page 183.)—*On Profit.*

In a recent theory of profit, the native and immediate forces by which it is determined, have been lost sight of—so as to carry a mysticism into the science, in all those places of it where profit enters as an element into its reasonings.

On this subject, Dr Smith's principle is the right one, and should have been adhered to. All other circumstances remaining the same, profit is lowered by the increase of capital, and raised by the diminution of it. It is equal to the difference between the cost and the price of commodities; between the sum laid out by one party on the production, and the sum laid out by another party in the purchase of them; between the amount of capital employed, and the amount of its returns. Let the latter be stationary, and it is quite evident that profit will vary with the former, but in an inverse order—the profit being large when the capital is small, and small when the capital is large; or even being extinguished, nay, converted into loss, which is a possible and frequently realized thing, when the capital is so large as either to equal or to exceed the returns which it meets with.

It had been well that both the language and reasoning of Dr Smith had been retained upon this subject. The proper and immediate cause of a fall in profits, while the effective demand for commodities remains unaltered, is an increase of capital without a corresponding increase in the

returns that are made for it. It is determined by the state of competition between capitalists, or rather between the capitals which they hold. If these increase either in number or in magnitude, without a proportional increase in the returning power, by the opening up of new lands, and the consequent increase of population; then profits must decline with the progress of accumulated wealth in society.

Consequent on this accumulation of capital, and antecedent to this fall of profit, there must have been an extension of the business of the country, in all the various branches of its trade and manufactures. And this extension will take place in the business of agriculture, as well as in any other. The same circumstances which lead men to extend their transactions in commerce, though with the prospect of a less return than before, will lead them to extend their transactions in agriculture, with the prospect of a less return than before. In other words, land of inferior fertility and produce will, by the operation of this cause, be taken into cultivation. This concern, like every other, will fluctuate with the fluctuations of profit and interest in society. Should there be a fall of interest, and a consequent facility of borrowing, in any particular year, or period of years, farmers will be induced to attempt soils that had not been previously entered. So soon as men are satisfied with a less return, they will carry the plough to a poorer territory than before. This is one of the many phenomena that must ensue from an augmented capital, and a reduced

rate of profit; and not peculiar to the affairs of husbandry, but exemplified in every other walk of enterprise and speculation.

Yet this phenomenon, but the subordinate result of a law having a distinct principle of its own, has itself been magnified into the principle; and a controlling force has been ascribed to that which is only the determinate consequence of a prior force, determining the rate of profit. The effect has been mistaken for the efficient. The produce of the land that is said to yield no rent, is conceived of as representing the aggregate of wages and profit. At most it is but the measure, and not the determinator, of the sum of these two. The wages of labour are not low, nor is profit either, because land of an extremely poor quality has been taken into cultivation; but this land has been taken into cultivation, because wages and profit are low. If wages be low, it is because labour, or the number of labourers, is in excess. If profit be low, it is because capital is in excess. But competition, the moving force in both instances, has been well nigh lost sight of. The land last cultivated has furnished some of our later economists with the materials of a formula—where the three elements of rent, and profit, and wages, have been made to enter, as symbols do into an equation, by means of a few transpositions upon which, the whole doctrine and philosophy of the subject has been newly cast, and are held to have been infallibly expounded.

And it is curious to observe the proceeds of this new mode of reasoning, through which, by a certain dexterous algebraic play, results are elicited

the most unexpected, and certainly the most opposite to all experience. One specimen may suffice. When once the produce of the last cultivated land enters as a sort of fixed quantity into an argument; then, representing, as it does, the sum of wages and profit, it will follow of course, that when wages rise, it can only be at the expense of profit, and when profit rises, it can only be at the expense of wages—the one being high when the other is low, and conversely. The strange conclusion educed from this is, that by increasing the wages of labour, we are on the high road to the underselling of our neighbours in foreign markets; because that the dearer the labour expended on the preparation of export articles, the cheaper can it be afforded when presented for sale. And the reason of this is, that profit being just as much lower as wages are higher, we make a saving on the cost of the article, with every new transfer in the course of its sales or stages of preparation, till the ultimate price may, in fact, be very much reduced by the repetition of this effect at each of the successive centages. And hence the paradox in question, advanced too with a sort of axiomatic certainty. It is a striking example of the extravagance into which men are sure to fall, when, forsaking the obvious and real principles of a subject, they give the precedency, over all sense and all experience, to the categories of a school.

We shall be saved from all such devious conclusions, if we only keep in sight the proper and immediate causes by which both wages and profit are determined. There is a greater identity of prin-

ciple between them than is commonly adverted to. The one depends on the proportion which the quantity of labour bears to the effective demand for its products; and the other, also, on the proportion which the quantity of capital bears to the effective demand for its products. Or, just recurring to the old language and style of conception upon this subject, we should say, that the one varies with the intensity of the competition among labourers for employment, and that the other varies with the intensity of the competition among capitalists for business. Should there then be a high standard of enjoyment among labourers, they will not marry so as to overstock the country with population; and so, just because their taste is high, their wages would be high: thus landing us in the important and delightful conclusion, that the people, collectively speaking, have their circumstances in their own hands—it being at the bidding of their collective will, whether the remuneration for their work shall be a scanty or a sufficient one. The same principle has not been extended to profit, though it be as strictly applicable to the one element as to the other. It is for each capitalist to determine how much of his profits he shall expend on personal or family indulgences, or how much of them he shall reserve for additional outlays upon his business. Should there be a general and voluntary descent among capitalists in respect of expenditure, this of itself, by adding to the investitures in trade, would produce a general fall of profit. Whereas, by means of expenditure in this class of society, profits

might be sustained at any given level—a level as much determined by the standard of enjoyment, or collective will of capitalists, as wages are by the collective will of labourers. However simple and obvious this consideration may be, yet the most important, and as yet unnoticed conclusions are deducible therefrom. Our only inference at present is, that there is no headlong necessity in any state of society, for either a wretchedly low wages or a ruinously low profit. Both, in fact, are dependent on moral causes. There is a moral preventive check, which, if put in steady operation throughout the labouring classes, would keep wages high. And, however, little adverted to,* there is an analogous check, which, operating among capitalists, would keep profit high. Instead of wages being necessarily low when profits are high, or conversely; both may rise contemporaneously, or fall contemporaneously. In other words, there is still a highway open to us, both for a well-conditioned peasantry, and a prosperous order of merchants and master-manufacturers in the land. There is no irreversible fatality in that march of agriculture among the poorer soils, which has been represented as bearing down profit and wages. Instead of this, profit and wages may each, in any point of the progress, make their own resolute stand, and arrest the march of agriculture. Let labourers, on the one hand, make a stand for higher wages, (and this they can only do effec-

* It is but justice to state, that this principle has been distinctly adverted to, and ingeniously illustrated, by Mr Thomas Perronet Thomson.

tively, by refraining from over-population;) and let capitalists, on the other, make a stand for higher profit, (and this they can only do effectively, by refraining from over-speculation:) and then, so far from their condition being overruled by the state of the husbandry, they may jointly overrule that state; and, just by the position which they might voluntarily unite in keeping up, may they both lower the rent of land, and somewhat limit its cultivation. Instead of being borne down by the tide, they could withstand and stem it; and instead of lying prostrate before the absorbing rent of the landlords, they might prescribe their own bounds to the wealth of the proprietors of the soil, which it could not overpass.

This is the only effectual, but withal peaceful and legitimate way, in which the other two classes of society can make head against the landlords. Rent, profit, and wages, have been denominated the three ingredients of value. We confess, that though at the expense of, and by an encroachment on the first, we should like the two last admitted to a larger relative share than they have at present; or, in other words, that the standard of enjoyment both among capitalists and labourers were higher, though, as a necessary consequence, the proprietors of the soil behoved to live less luxuriously, or less splendidly than before. This consummation is not to be arrived at through the medium of a contentious politics, or by the triumph of what has been called popular rights. It will be altogether a moral victory, which can only be gained and perpetuated by dint of popular in-

telligence and worth. Let workmen, having a proper control over their appetite for present enjoyment, abate of their reckless improvidence; and capitalists, having a proper control over their appetite for gain, abate of their reckless and excessive speculation; and we should soon witness both a higher wage and a higher profit. Instead of the action and reaction being only between these two elements, so that when the one rises, the other must necessarily fall; the action and reaction are shared among three elements, even profit, wages, and rent—so that the two first may draw indefinitely upon the last; and, with the fall of rent, profit and wages may rise, and that contemporaneously. We are aware, that, on this taking place, there might be a contraction of the agriculture; the lowest land having to yield a larger produce for the now increased remuneration of the farmer and labourers than before. But our decided preference is for a happier and more prosperous, even though it should be a somewhat more limited society.

(Note F. page 203.)—*On Free Trade.*

There is an artificial limit to the extension of trade, created by monopoly; and it is a very general conception, that, after its abolition, all let or limitation is thenceforth done away. But there is also a natural limit, which is felt, when the power to produce on the one hand, is put forth to a

greater extent than can be met by the power to purchase on the other. There is palpable intimation given of this, in those glutted markets, which are the result of over-trading. Even Dr Smith does not seem to be sufficiently aware, how closely placed the natural barrier is to the artificial one, though somewhat exterior to it. He was too intent on the destruction of the one, to have adverted much either to the existence or nearness of the other. And, accordingly, the idea most commonly suggested by the perusal of his work is, that if the wall of monopoly were only taken down, there would, thenceforth, be room for an advancement altogether indefinite, in prosperity and opulence. Hence the brilliant but unfulfilled anticipations of Canning, and Robinson, and Huskisson, on the opening up of new markets, and the removal of old fetters from the enterprise of British merchants. Hence, too, the mania communicated, as if by infection, from their speeches, and which spread itself, in a spirit of wild and ruinous adventure, over the land. The secret of that deep and general delusion which exists in the minds of men, as if the capabilities of foreign trade were perfectly inexhaustible, was fully let out, when, on the artificial check of monopoly or legal prohibition being done away, they, with an utter disregard to so much as the existence of a natural check, launched forth into all the varieties of unbridled speculation. The consequence was inevitable. On the taking down of the interior wall, they entered as if now on an indefinite career; but soon ran their heads against the exterior wall,

which was situated at but a very small distance on the other side of the first. The consequent check and revulsion were felt throughout the whole commercial world. There may have ultimately taken place, a slight, but scarcely a sensible enlargement. Certain it is, that the sanguine hope of this enlargement was soon followed up, by a disappointed feeling of straitness and difficulty. And the gluts which took place, both on the abolition of the East India monopoly, and on the more general adoption of the liberal system, give palpable evidence, how closely, though somewhat on the outside of the artificial barrier, commerce is beset with a natural barrier, beyond which she cannot overpass.

We are not, therefore, of the number of those who rate very high the economic advantages of the system of free trade. It will not much, if at all, enlarge that wealth which is in the hand of merchants, though, by its means, we may perhaps obtain a greater abundance of foreign commodities at the same cost, or obtain them cheaper than before. There will thus be a certain, though, we apprehend, a small addition to the enjoyment of consumers—which, in spite of the constant preference given by mercantile economists to the means over the end, to the benefit of producers over the benefit of customers, is really, after all, the great and only end of commerce. We can even imagine a slight extension given by means of free trade, to agriculture—in as far as we may possibly, through it, obtain at a cheaper rate, either some of the materials of husbandry, or some of those articles

which enter into the maintenance of husbandmen. Yet notwithstanding this our humble estimate of the advantages of free trade, in an economical point of view, there are certain attendant moral benefits, if we may so term them, which render the adoption of the system one of the best and wisest achievements of an enlightened national policy. In the first place, it cancels a thousand heart-burnings at home. The admission of one class to a particular trade, with the exclusion of all others, is felt by the community at large to be an injustice and a wrong; and it is well when this, and every other rankling topic of disaffection, are, as much as possible, done away. Government incurs a prodigious waste of popularity, whenever its policy stands associated, in the public imagination, with the failures and fluctuations of trade. And were it for nothing else than to free itself from the burden of this unnecessary odium, it were far better that it stood palpably dissevered from the affairs of commerce altogether; or at least that it never interfered with them, save for the purposes of a revenue, and for the maintenance of the interests of justice. But the system is not more favourable to domestic than to foreign tranquillity. The government which upholds it, not only stands forth in a fair and conciliatory aspect to its own subjects, but also to other nations. The abolition of the restrictive system in commerce, is, in fact, the abolition of the sorest exasperations and jealousies which have taken place among the states of the civilized world. There is, therefore, a very high philanthropic interest involved in the

maintenance of the opposite system. It is on the side both of internal and external peace. It would quiet many a discontent within our own territory, and dry up the teeming fountain of most of our modern wars.

Yet we are not without our fears, that the system of free trade may retrograde, instead of advancing towards its secure and lasting establishment, throughout the coming periods of our history. A liberal politics forms no guarantee, but, we doubt, the opposite, for a liberal political economy.* This is a subject on which the popular

* On this subject I am happy to find that I can appeal to the authority of Mr Senior. I refer to the following extracts from his work on "The Mercantile Theory of Wealth:"—

"If the unhappy prejudices that now exist on this subject should continue, and if the extension of representative governments should increase the power of public opinion over the policy of nations, I fear that commerce may not long be enabled to retain even that degree of freedom that she now enjoys."—"I have perfect reliance on the knowledge and good intentions of our present ministers—but very little on the knowledge possessed by the country at large. And if ministers are unsupported by the country at large—if each class, in turn, is to be permitted a complete or a partial monopoly, and, bribed by this sacrifice of the general and permanent interest of the public to its own partial and immediate advantage, to allow others to clamour for the power to exercise a similar oppression—if ministers are not aided by the public voice in their struggles against individual rapacity—we shall tread backwards, and with greater rapidity, the few steps which we have so laboriously gained. Slowly and reluctantly, and as if parting from our dearest friend, we have begun to withdraw from the restrictive system. If once we begin to re-approach it, I am justified by all experience in the fear, that, in our retrograde motion, we shall not stop at the point at which we originally set out. It will have been an unsuccessful rebellion against popular prejudice; and, like all unsuccessful rebellions, strengthen and consolidate the ruling power."

"In a representative government, where each individual may proclaim, in their utmost exaggeration, his sufferings and his fears, where the power arbitrarily to do good is chained by the same fetters which restrain the power arbitrarily to do evil—

and the philosophical mind are not at all in harmony; and the very admission into parliament of so large an influence from the will of the humbler classes, may, after all, endanger the cause of sound legislation, on every topic where the seeming and the substantial interests of the community are at variance. We are not afraid of any monopoly in favour of the few, to the exclusion, from certain trades, of the many in our own land; as the will of the many, when rendered effectual in consequence of a freer and fuller representation, will completely overbear any partiality of this sort. But we do fear, that prejudice and partiality may again have the ascendant in the regulation of our commercial policy with the people of other lands; and that, in an assembly of mercantile legislators, there may, by mutual connivance, be a protection awarded to each of the separate trading interests, however paltry or local it may be, against the rivalship of foreigners. We can even imagine, that, in virtue of a more democratic government, there might be a more headlong propensity to war; and certain it is, that the popular mind, more especially when inflamed by the cupidity and sensitive alarm of the trading classes, is not always on the side of a pacific policy. It seems all the more imperative in these circumstances, that, with every stretch of the elective franchise, there should be a corresponding stretch of education, and of

where, in short, public opinion is omnipotent, and is, on these subjects, so ill-informed, and therefore so easily misdirected—there appears, at first sight, no limit to the extent to which individual interest, popular prejudice, and national jealousy, might not carry the system of exclusion "

larger intelligence among the people; lest, in the scramble of personal or provincial interests, that calm and comprehensive wisdom should be lost sight of, which ought to characterize the legislation of every great empire.

(Note G. page 243.)—*On Corn Laws.*

For the sake of its moral benefit, we know of no achievement more urgently desirable than that of a free corn trade. There is not a more fertile topic of clamour and burning discontent all over the land; and, were it but effectually set at rest, we are aware of nothing which might serve more to sweeten the breath of British society. The interest of cheaper food, is not the only one concerned in the abolition of all those restraints which have been laid upon its importation. There is, beside this, a special interest felt, by that numerous class who are engaged in the business of export manufactures, or export merchandise. The limit of our imports determines the limit of our exports; so that when the one trade comes to its *ne plus ultra*, the other must also be brought to a dead stand. They mutually limit and determine each other. So that the advantage to our export commerce, from a further enlargement of our imports, opening, as it would, a fuller and freer exportation, and telling most favourably for this great branch of trade upon the foreign exchanges, is really one of the most urgent forces that is now

operating on the side of an unrestricted corn trade. We shall therefore attempt a brief exposition of what we hold to be the leading principles, and the likely results of such a measure.

First, then, though there should, on the event of an instant and total abolition of the corn laws, be such a reduction of price, as would translate the population into circumstances of larger comfort and sufficiency—we cannot imagine that this would be more than temporary. The proportion of the food to the population might be increased at the commencement; but, reasoning on human nature, and on all experience, this would soon be followed up by the old proportion of the population to the food. Such a regress of the ocean from our shores, as left behind it a million of rich arable acres, would cause an instant and large descent in the price of grain. But no one thinks that a permanent cheapness would be the result of it. The difference between one census and another, though only at the distance of ten years, may well convince us, how speedily the former balance between demand and supply, and so the former prices of food, would be restored. Yet even still, however frequent and familiar the topic is with economical writers, the great majority of our landholders seem blind to the peculiar and characteristic excellence of that commodity in which their wealth lies. It is a commodity which never can be so multiplied, as permanently to glut the market. By the stimulus which its abundance gives to population, it is very sure, in the long run, to create a commensurate market for itself.

Unlike to other commodities, it has the virtue of increasing the demand for itself, just as the supply is increased. This single circumstance should help, and perhaps, above all others, to tranquillize the fears of our landlords, and to give them a feeling of conscious strength and superiority over all the fluctuations to which commerce, in every other of her departments, is liable. They are the holders of the necessaries of life; and, in virtue of being so, theirs is an upper and secure region, where they enjoy, without the possibility of dethronement, an entire and essential command over the services of men. They misunderstand their own situation, when they participate in the tremulous anxiety of merchants. Their wealth is as indestructible as are the laws and elements of nature; having in it that character of permanency, which belongs to the processes both of the physical and the moral world—based as it is on the capabilities of the soil, and the constitution of humanity.

But let us attempt a closer treatment of the question. We would, in the second place, remark, that there seems nothing in the freest importation of corn, which, *of itself*, should permanently contract the agriculture of our own land. The reason why the poorest of our cultivated soils has been entered on is, that still it had enough of capability for feeding its agricultural labourers and their secondaries, beside yielding a surplus to remunerate the farmer. This reason is not at all affected by the admission of foreign grain from abroad. The capability which had brought down

the agriculture so far, would still remain after the abolition of all corn laws. We are aware of a possible cheapening of the article at the first, which, by translating the people into better circumstances, might raise, for a time, the quality both of their food and their secondary accommodations. While this lasted, the poorest soil which cultivation had formerly reached, might not be able to yield the now higher remuneration for labour; and there might, for some very brief season of years, be a receding of the home agriculture, from the extreme limit to which it had been carried. But without a permanent rise in the popular standard of enjoyment, this could only be temporary. The people would again multiply to the now more abundant food; and this they would just continue to do, till agriculture should recover the very limit from which it had, for a short interval, retired. When the wages, estimated in grain, had become as low as formerly, the agriculture of our own country would then become as large as formerly. Throughout the gradation of soils, the same differences in respect of produce would obtain between the superior land, and that which is said to yield no rent. Or, in other words, the rent of all land, *estimated in produce*, the corn rent of all land, would, in spite of foreign competition, be just what it wont.

But it follows not, that though rent in kind would, after a season of disturbance, settle at the same point which it did formerly, rent in money would therefore do the same. And this, in the peculiar circumstances of Britain, may most se-

verely affect the substantial income of landlords. The thing apprehended is, that, on the opening of our ports for the free admission of corn from abroad, there would be a fall in money prices—and so, a fall in money rents. It would matter not to the real interest of our proprietors, if this fall in money prices extended, and in like proportion, to every other article of enjoyment. There would then, in spite of the declension in nominal income, be the same real command as before over all the comforts and conveniences of life. Were labour, and the products of labour, to become as much cheaper as corn had, then the same corn rent would purchase as great an amount as before of all that entered into the use and maintenance of families. But there is a special cause, in our own country, to prevent this. Though every other ingredient in the price of commodities should fall as much as corn, there is an ingredient which remains, and must remain, in a great measure stationary. There can be no proportional remission of taxes to compensate this fall of money prices. There might, had government nothing else to do with a revenue, than meet the outgoings of its present expenditure; for then it might proportionally lessen the allowance of its various functionaries; and, with a money expenditure reduced in all its branches, maintain the public service in as great strength and effectiveness as before. But along with its current and actual expenses, which might fall with the price of all other things, the revenue is also charged with the permanent interest of an old and heavy debt, which no retrench-

ment can alleviate, save the retrenchment of a partial bankruptcy. This is the capital reason, why, though the money price of grain falls, the money taxes cannot be made to fall proportionally; and it is this, chiefly, which gives to landed proprietors a real and substantive interest in high money rents. The great national mortgage of our public debt has the same effect generally, that private mortgages have on the holders of individual estates, personally and particularly. They become substantially, as well as nominally richer, by the augmentation of their money income; because then the interest of their debts forms a smaller proportion than before of their whole revenue. And the converse effect takes place on a fall of money income. In other words, it is the existence of our national debt which gives to the possessors of the soil their only rational interest in the corn laws; and the likeliest method by which to harmonize the discordant views and feelings of all parties upon this subject, were an adjustment between the land and the fund-holders.

We hold it impossible to effect any right adjustment between these two classes, but by means of taxation—the topic of one of our subsequent arguments; ere we have overtaken which, we can attempt no complete solution of the difficulty in question. But, meanwhile, we can state what appears to us the likelihoods in regard to the future money price of corn, on the event of the abolition of the corn laws. It can be treated, we think, in no other way than as a speculation of likelihoods; the certainties of the subject being, from the very nature

of the case, unattainable, but through the medium of experience. Beforehand, we can only offer hypothetical results—or the results that would ensue on certain given suppositions, which, anterior to an actual trial, we have really no means of verifying.

We have already stated, that, with every addition to our excrescent population, there behoved to be a fresh and extended draft of corn from abroad; which, by each enlargement of the importation, would become dearer than before. There ensues a very speedy augmentation of difficulty, and so of expense, in the transport of grain, when, in consequence of the need for increased supplies it must be fetched by inland carriage, even for small distances, from such places as are inaccessible to navigation. With every enlargement of these distances, corn would be landed dearer in our own country; and one can imagine, that, from this cause alone, the dearness, in an unrestricted state of things, may at length be equal to that dearness which is the effect of our present prohibitions. There would on the event of a total, and, at the same time, instant abolition of our corn laws, be a desultory fall of price to the utmost consternation of the landed proprietors. But with this abolition of the present restraint on importation, there were the abolition of a present restraint on population also—the excrescent portion of which would, from the commencement of this new era of liberty, grow to a magnitude, that, owing to the number and uncertainty of the elements concerned in the process, is at this moment undefinable. Certain it is, there-

fore, that there would be a recovery, to a certain extent, from the first cheapness, occasioned by an immediate abolition, if that, instead of the far wiser step of a gradual abolition, were actually resolved upon. But we hold it beyond the reach of all human anticipation, to say how far this recovery would proceed—or whether it would fully restore the money price of grain, so as to work out a full compensation to our landlords, for the loss of that protection which they at present enjoy.

For who can compute the situation of that point, at which, in the state of perfect liberty, the underselling power of Britain will be exactly balanced, by the expense of its farthest and heaviest importation? The equipoise would at length be gained; but there are too many influences beyond the reach of precise calculation, for our being able to say when. Every augmentation, on the one hand, of our foreign manufactures, may either lessen their price in foreign markets, or add to the expense of their transit, when their superabundance is forwarded from nearer to more distant places of sale; and every consequent augmentation, on the other hand, of our imported food, enhances the dearness of it: so that the tendency, from the very first, is towards a limit, however impossible to foretell where this limit is to be, or after what increase of our excrescent population it will proceed no farther We do not know how far, or how long, the industry and ingenuity of our own countrymen are to keep ahead of the industry and ingenuity of the people in other lands. We cannot answer for the number or extent of those regions abroad, where there shall

be a constant preference of British goods to their own home manufactures, even though returns must be made for them in agricultural produce. We cannot tell the degree in which the encouragement of the industry, and the consequent increase of the numbers, of their own people, will absorb their agricultural produce, and make it an article of scarcer and dearer exportation. There is no foreseeing what the new materials, and what the new processes of industry may be, which shall spring up in other parts of the world; so that many of our present customers may be led to seek nearer to their own doors for those articles of taste and of enjoyment, which they now fetch from our far distant island. We cannot anticipate with certainty on either side of this question; neither how far the perpetual additions to British industry and skill shall extend our superiority, nor in how far the rivalship of other nations shall at length deduct from it. There are a thousand possibilities concerned in this matter, through which we can no more see our way, than we can through the contingencies of the weather. They are like the unassignable quantities of an indeterminate equation, which lead but to a dependent or conditional result. We cannot decide beforehand the proportion which, when things are left to their free course, our extrinsic shall bear to our natural population. It lies undisclosed in the womb of futurity; and both the resulting population and the resulting price, that would ensue from a free state of things must be left to the verifications of experience.

Yet, in the face of all this uncertainty, we feel

no hesitation in affirming, both the expediency and the rightness of a free trade in corn. That it would land us in a larger excrescent population than we have at this moment, is little to be doubted. How much larger, we have not the means of calculating. Our own impression is, that it would not be nearly so much larger as is commonly anticipated. We should not be surprised, if, in a free race of improvement among the nations, the excrescent population of Britain did not, eventually and ultimately, amount to one-tenth of its natural. There are certain physical inequalities, which might maintain for us a permanent superiority over other lands, even after all the moral inequalities had subsided. Still we cannot imagine, that, with every advantage we have for commerce, our trade should overlap our agriculture, so far as to extend our population beyond a small fraction of the number maintained by the produce of our own territory. And even though it should be a large, instead of a small fraction, we would still advocate the cause of freedom. The evils apprehended from this are two. There might first be a considerable reduction in the money price of food, to an extent which, if not provided against, would depress the substantial, as well as the nominal income of our landlords. And, second, there might be a precarious dependence on supplies from abroad, which might subject us, at times, to an aggravated suffering, on the event of a general scarcity. Yet we would incur both these hazards, rather than we would the certain and urgent evil of a dissatisfied population; who feel, and perhaps with justice too, as if defrauded

of their rights, by the compulsory restraints of the legislature on the importation of food. We hold, that an immunity from this sore heart-burning were cheaply purchased, even with the risk of every evil which may have been felt or foretold as the probable consequence of liberty. It were right that it should be a gradual, but, ultimately, a complete emancipation.

It is remarkable, that the first of the apprehended evils, that is, the injury done to the landlords, would become lighter, just as the second, or the dependence of our country on foreign supplies, ever increasing with the increase of our extrinsic population, became more aggravated. It is obvious, that the greater this population became, the heavier would be the expense at which we had to fetch agricultural produce from abroad, so that the money price of corn would rise in this country; and there is no saying how nearly this might effect a full compensation to the proprietors of the soil. But though it should fall short of this, the real injury to the landlords, by a fall in the money price of corn, stands chiefly connected, as we have already remarked, with the inequality to which it would give rise between them and the fund-holders. And should this inequality be adjusted, the injury would be in a great measure repaired. Now, we can perceive how this might be brought about by a rule of conditional taxation. For the sake of example, let us imagine that all assessed taxes, and all those taxes on commodities which bore on the general enjoyments of the people, were abandoned; and that there was substituted, in their

place, an income tax of 20 per cent. on land and fund-holders to be exacted equally from both classes, when the average price of wheat for the preceding year had been sixty shillings a quarter. A scale of variations in the tax could be made to quadrate with a scale of variations in the price. When wheat fell beneath sixty shillings by successive differences, there might be a series of corresponding diminutions on the income tax of land-holders, and of increase on the income tax of fund-holders. And the converse of this could be made to take place, when wheat rose above sixty shillings. We should thus, with all the various conceivable changes in the price of wheat, have the land-holders paying 19, or 18, or 17 per cent. and so downward in the scale in cheap years, and in dear 21, or 22, or 23, and so upward in the scale; while the charges on the fund-holders would stand on the opposite side of par. The same rule of equity might be extended, even to private mortgagees upon land. We enter into no further details or modifications upon this plan. It is offered merely as a suggestion, and as being precisely of that character that is adapted to a measure of which the issues are uncertain. The conditional nature of the scheme meets, and is accommodated to, the uncertainty; and if it serve no other purpose, it may at least demonstrate, that an adjustment which shall harmonize the main interests of this complicated question, is not impracticable.

The second apprehended evil we hold to be far more serious, than most of the advocates for a free corn trade seem disposed to allow. The depen-

dence of a country, to any great extent, for the subsistence of its population, on other and distant lands, we hold to be a fearful element of insecurity and weakness. It is this which accounts for the ephemeral duration of many of those commercial states, that have figured their brief and brilliant hour in the history of the world. When their commerce abandoned them, the stamina, not of their greatness alone, but often of their very being, abandoned them. Or, if they do abide, theirs, like Venice, has been a shrunk and shrivelled existence; and that, just in proportion as their now extinct commerce did at one time overlap their agriculture. Our comfort, in reference to Britain, is, that though this may take place to a certain extent, it will not do it far. An excrescence will be formed, but such as may at any time be thrown off without impairing the substantial wealth or greatness of our nation. This accretion to our trade, consequent on the abolition of the monopoly in corn, which so many look to with triumphant anticipation, we should look to with alarm, did we conceive that it would effect a mighty proportional addition to our commerce—and only look to with toleration, because of its believed and hoped-for insignificance. It is vain to affirm that Britain, when thus extended, would rest as firmly on the motley foundation of home and foreign agriculture, as she would if, within her natural limits, she rested exclusively on her own proper basis. The advocates for freedom reason badly on this subject, when they speak of the dependence between us and other countries being reciprocal—or that they depended as much

on our manufactures, as we on their food. The distinction is overlooked here, (and this is a cause of error in many other departments of political economy,) between the necessaries and conveniences, or, still more, between the necessaries and luxuries of life. They can want our handiwork, but we, with a large surplus population, could not want their food. Our comfort is, that it will not be large. If it were, we should at times be exposed to visitations of fearful calamity—a calamity that might be alleviated, but would not be averted, by the stored and accumulated grain of former years, of which the advocates on the side of liberty conceive that it might ever be in readiness for such an emergency.

Any apprehension we have from a repeal of the corn laws, is for the country at large, and not for the landlords. There might be immediate loss to them, from a change in the power of money; but even this could be made up by an adjusted taxation. After which we see nothing else but their increasing wealth and importance, in every new addition made to the excrescent commerce and population of the land. Their estates would rise in value, just as the contiguous land of a great city does, with every enlargement in the number of its houses and families. And every season of universal scarcity, while the cause of severest suffering to the British community, would prove a harvest to the British landlords. They would have a fearful command over the services of the disposable population. The high prices of such a period, enhanced by such an accumulation of human beings upon our territory, would mightily enlarge

their fortunes, or clear away the debts of their former extravagance. It may be recollected how the famines of 1799 and 1800 redounded to the sudden prosperity of agriculturists. We should anticipate, under the reformed system, a still more frequent recurrence of like fits and intervals of prosperity. The holders of the necessaries of life, therefore, may well give all their apprehensions to the wind. With the certainty that the population will increase just as their commodity increases, from whatever quarter it may be brought, they have nothing ultimately to fear in the consequences of an unexcepted freedom. They, at all times, and amid all changes, will be lords of the ascendant. They alone stand on firm vantage-ground, and should of all men be exempted from those mercantile jealousies, by unworthily acting upon which, they have dissevered, both from their persons and their interests, the affections of the people.

But the most important consideration of all, or, at least, that which harmonizes most with the general object of our work, is, that however great the immediate relief of a free corn trade may be, it would at best be temporary, and, at the end of some brief period, would at length cease to be the minister of a greater abundance to each of the families of the land, than they at present enjoy. The produce of our home agriculture is mightily increased within the last thirty years. Yet who will affirm that this has secured ought like a permanent sufficiency and comfort to the people? It has given us a larger, but not a more prosperous commonalty than before. And, without a change in the taste

and moral habitude of the working classes, this will infallibly be the result of all the additional supplies that we shall ever obtain from foreign agriculture. The increase of their numbers will follow close on the enlargement of their food; so that, at the end of the process, nay, even throughout the process, there will scarcely be the sense and perception of any greater sufficiency than before. By all means let the boon be granted. Let the freedom of this trade be restored perfectly, though progressively—that government may withdraw itself from the obnoxious attitude of appearing to stand in the way of the people's subsistence. Let this semblance of hostility between the governors and the governed be for ever obliterated; for, however insignificant the material, the moral benefit that would ensue is incalculable. The material enlargement from this, as from every other source that we have hitherto attended to, would be but temporary in its duration, and limited in its amount; and, after it had reached its maximum, we should only behold a larger, but in every way as straitened a population, as we do at present, or as we have done in the past stages of our history. Like all the other external capabilities of our state, it will soon be overtaken. The only sure remedy is an internal one. The people cannot, by any possibility, indefinitely provide from without, for their growing numbers. But by the moral operation of prudence and principle from within, they can accommodate their numbers to their provision. However wide the limit may be, yet, if they inconveniently press upon it, there can be no feeling of largeness. How-

ever narrow the limit may be, yet, if they keep sufficiently within it, this, of itself, as among the peasants of sterile Norway, will give the feeling of largeness. In a word, this whole argument on foreign trade, and more especially on the foreign trade in corn, but leads to one repetition more of the oft-repeated lesson—that it is not by the force of material resources, but by the force of moral restraints, we shall at length realize the spectacle of a general comfort among thriving and well-conditioned families. In other words, there is no other power than that of Christian education, which can chase away the economic or political distempers of our land; which can either conduct us at the first, or keep us permanently afterwards, in the state of a peaceful, and contented, and flourishing society.

(NOTE H. page 293.)—*On the gradual Reform of our Financial System.*

Practical men, with their contempt for theory, which almost always is a contempt for generalized truth, receive with incredulity every affirmation which relates to a state of things that greatly differs from the present state, with whose details and familiarities they are often so minutely conversant. It greatly concerns, therefore, the advocates of every change from one state to another, that the transition which they recommend should be made out in a way as gradual and safely progressive as may be; and that, not merely for the purpose of

avoiding those substantial inconveniences, which all sudden and desultory movements are sure to bring along with them, but for the purpose also, if possible, of reconciling those alarmists, whose resistance to innovation forms the great barrier in the way of all improvements.

It is the dictate of true wisdom, that nothing, save where principle or urgent necessity is involved, should be done *per saltum*—but that every thing, when possible, should be done by a process, or without violence to that great law, both of nature and of sound politics, the law of continuity. It follows not, because we recommend a complete change or a complete abolition, that we therefore want the instant change or the instant abolition of any thing. However firm our conviction of the expediency of certain measures, yet we should desire, in the act of carrying them into accomplishment, never to forget the deference which is due to existing interests, or even to existing prejudices.

On this principle we should deprecate an immediate, although we are friendly to a total abolition of the present corn laws. This should be made to take place by a gradual relaxation in fractional instalments, as of a tenth annually, whereby they might be wholly done away in ten years; at which rate, we feel confident that, before the termination of the process, all parties would be experimentally convinced, how much they had been influenced by the veriest bugbear, in their opposition to a free corn trade.

Yet there is one vestige of these restrictions, which we should feel inclined to retain—not as a

relic of the old system certainly, nor yet as a protection to British landlords; but for the sake of a small addition to the public revenue, which it were most rightful and legitimate to raise from this particular source. The truth is, that these importations of grain, although exaggerated by the fancy of many, in respect to their future and eventual magnitude, will land us in a somewhat increased population, and perhaps place us in a somewhat more precarious state than we might otherwise have been. A somewhat larger establishment, both civil and military, may be required by this extension of our numbers; and it is but fair, that the excrescent population should in some way or other, be made to defray the additional expense which their own residence amongst us shall have created. We have already stated our reasons for thinking why taxation should be shifted away from commodities altogether, and more especially from those which are in general use, whether among capitalists or labourers. But we confess, that, for the purpose of reaching the excrescent population, we should not object to a slight duty, as of five shillings a quarter on imported corn—to be remitted only in years of scarcity. So far from this being in contravention to any doctrine of ours, we hold, that not only would it be consonant with strict principle, but that the theoretic perfection of our scheme would rather be completed than impaired by it.

But neither should the general commutation of all taxes into a territorial impost be adopted immediately. It should be done by a series of particular commutations, each of which would lighten the

community of some distinct burden, till the whole was, in the course of years, transferred by successive centages on the income of our landed and funded proprietors. The work of reform should begin with those taxes which bear on the essential maintenance of labourers, till every vestige of an imposition on any of their comforts was completely done away. It might then proceed to a similar relief from house, and window, and all assessed taxes. If one-third of these were taken off annually and commuted, we should be wholly delivered from them in three years. The reform might thus be made to move onward from one commodity, or object of taxation, to another—while, at each step, the administration would gather new popularity, and earn, at every distinct act, a fresh sentiment of gratulation and gratitude from the country at large. Long before the process was consummated, the landlords, however alarmed for the system at the first, would have the experimental conviction of its perfect innocence, nay, of its great positive benefit to themselves. At all events, did their fears turn out to be very obstinate, or even incurable, the process might be arrested at any given point; when, instead of a large income tax to cover all our present duties, they might be saddled with a very moderate one, in lieu of the most obnoxious of our present burdens. It is thus, that without endangering their own prosperity in the least, but, we think, most materially advancing it, they have it in their power, by successive peace-offerings, to mollify the turbulent spirit of the age, and establish their own influence

and security on a firm basis for many generations. We know not a more effectual method of charming away a rancorous politics from our nation—or a method by which the discordant elements that are now so busily at work in the midst of British society, could be more readily and fully harmonized.

But it may be long before the doctrine is admitted, that all taxes fall ultimately on land, and still longer, before it is proceeded on in the business of legislation. The conviction that it were expedient to commute many of our most irritating taxes into a *general income tax*, may take the precedency, for many years, of the conviction that it were fair and equitable to commute all taxes whatever into a territorial impost. And we should be thankful, if the former conviction were proceeded on till the latter was fully established. It were infinitely better than the present universal system of taxation upon commodities, that there should be an income tax, although it did include the mercantile along with the landed classes. We believe the latter would pay all; but, leaving this question to be settled afterwards between these two classes, there is another question more urgent still, and demanding an immediate settlement; we mean the question between the higher and the humbler classes in society. An income tax on the former, to the ostensible relief of the latter, would wrest their most formidable weapon from the hand of demagogues. It were the grand specific, we believe, for appeasing the outcries of public discontent, and so of warding off from the cause of public order and tranquillity, the principal danger to

which, in these perilous times, it is exposed. And it were a cheap purchase of security to the payers, for it would just be making them pay openly, what, though in disguise, they now pay substantially and really.

And we would not only concede, for a time, a part of our theory, to the demand of those who prefer a general to a territorial income tax: we can even admit, that the main objects of financial reform might be achieved, although the commutation from commodities to income were not universal. There are certain establishments, as the post-office for example, which might be upheld, and continue to yield a revenue to government, though without the penalties and restraints by which it is at present guarded as a monopoly. There are even certain articles of enjoyment, as the higher wines and other undoubted luxuries, which may be taxed to any extent, without affecting the comfort of the lower classes. But sugar and tea enter far too largely into the system of their maintenance to be thus classified; insomuch, that the abolition of the tax upon these would lead, at no great distance of time, to the cheapening of labour, and so to the extension of agriculture. This tax, therefore, should be wholly commuted; and, in short, if ought but an income tax is to be retained, it should stand exclusively associated with the enjoyments and expenditure of the wealthy, so as not to leave even the semblance or the shadow of any hardship on the working classes of society.*

* It would more fully accomplish this desirable object, if the income or property tax, instead of being levied by a centage on

With such views, we cannot share in the patriotic enthusiasm which is felt on the subject of retrenchment. Our patriotism and philanthropy incline us the other way. In common estimation, the demands of the public service are regarded as so many encroachments on the general comfort of society. In our estimation, they are but encroachments on the luxury of one class; and that is, the landed proprietors: and we cannot regard with complacency the abridgments which are made, either in the number or the support of national functionaries, when we believe that the only effect will be, to enlarge the means of the aristocracy, and enable them to live in greater splendour or delicacy than before. So far from taxation having been carried to its extreme limit, we believe it was never at a greater distance from the limit than at this moment; and to substantiate the position, we make our confident appeal to the growing number of those families in the country who are elevated above the condition of labourers, to the increased profusion of their tables, and the increased magnificence of their houses, and furniture, and equipage. In other words, there is still, with all the outcry of our being an overburdened people—there is still a larger fund for the additional imposts of government, than at any former period in British history; or, which is the same thing, a larger disposable population, who, with but the surrender of luxury on the part of private indi-

the whole income, were levied by a centage on the excess of that income over a certain fixed income, beneath which taxation should not be carried.

viduals, can be spared for enlarging the civil, and the military, and the educational, and all the useful or respectable establishments of the nation. When told, as we often are, that no trade can bear to be taxed any further; our reply is, that it is not the trade which furnishes the tax. Trade is but the channel, and not the fountain-head, of all the supplies which come into the treasury. It is not commerce, but its customers, who pay all taxes; and these are, mainly, the holders of the maintenance of labour. They can bear to be further taxed, so long as they indulge in articles of enjoyment which might be dispensed with; and, in giving up these, they might abridge or annihilate many a trade, yet without destroying the sustenance either of its capitalists or labourers, which, instead of being destroyed, is but transferred into the coffers of government. By this process, we but exchange the products of commerce and manufactures for public benefits; and we repeat, that instead of stinting any goodly or desirable objects of patriotism, never was there a time when they might be more freely and bounteously extended. Having such views on the real effects and rationale of taxation, we cannot give our admiration or approval to the scurvy economics of the day. To our eye, they have the characteristics of selfishness and sordidness; and we can see nothing in these paltry savings of government, but a surrender, of great public interests, that the ignoble gratifications of sense or of vanity may be left unimpaired.

One great benefit of our proposed commutation

were, that it would break up the association which now obtains between lofty and high-minded patriotism on the one hand, and this wretched penuriousness on the other. It might perhaps break up too, that low arithmetical politics which has had too long the ascendancy in the councils of the nation. It would bring the real sides of the alternative clearly and undisguisedly into view; making it quite palpable, that the maintenance of the general population was in no way affected by taxes; so that after this element had been discharged from the reasoning, it would become manifest as day, that taxation and the public service might be indefinitely extended, without one earthly interest but that of the landlord's being made to suffer from it.

There is one obvious effect that would ensue from this great change in the financial system of the country. It would lower the money price of manufacturing labour; and so, by cheapening, it would enlarge our exports. The taxes at present do not neutralize; but they so far countervail the natural advantages of British industry, as to bring us sooner than otherwise to the limit of our exportation. By enlarging this limit, and so extending our foreign markets, we should certainly export a greater amount of manufactures than we do at present; and this would seem to land us in what we certainly do not hold to be a desirable object, the increase of our excrescent population. It should be recollected, however, that the same remission of taxes which would cheapen manufacturing, would also cheapen agricultural labour; and

so, would both let forth the agriculture upon inferior soils, and spread a more strenuous cultivation over the whole territory. There would, along then with the extension of our commerce, be an extension of our agriculture; so that the one might possibly not overlap the other to a greater extent than before. The return imports for the additional exports, need not consist of additional agricultural produce, to feed the then larger excrescent population. They may consist of additional foreign luxuries, to be purchased by the landed proprietors, whose then larger revenues, from the extension of the agriculture, should enable them to live more sumptuously than before. Or they may consist of additional second necessaries—so named, because, though imported from abroad, they do, in fact, form objects of demand, and so enter into the maintenance of the general population. We have already adverted, and with feelings of gratulation, to the dissimilarity between Britain and those smaller states, whose importance and glory departed when their commerce abandoned them. The difference lies in the amplitude of our agricultural basis, so that although commerce should forsake our shores, we should find a resource and a harbourage for almost all the population who are now employed in it. Now, whatever adds to the agricultural basis, augments this security; and the remission of all taxes which bear on the maintenance of labour, has clearly this effect. It is tantamount to making the country a larger one than before; and the likelihood is, that with all the facilities given by this financial reform to manu-

facturing labour, yet, with the commensurate facilities given at the same time to agricultural labour, the excrescent population might not have a greater proportion to the natural, after the change than before it.

Synoptical View *of the Political Economy of this Volume.**

It has not been our object to deliver a regular system of political economy. It has been to establish the following specific proposition—That no economic enlargements in the wealth and resources of a country, can ensure ought like a permanent comfort or sufficiency to the families of the land. Followed up as these enlargements are, by a commensurate, or generally by an overpassing increase of the population—the country, while becoming richer in the aggregate, may continue to teem with as great, perhaps a greater, amount of individual distress and penury, than in the humbler and earlier days of her history. In these circumstances, the highway to our secure and stable prosperity is, not so much to enlarge the limit of our external means, as so to restrain the numbers of the population, that they shall not press too hard upon that limit. But the only way of rightly accomplishing this, is through the medium of a higher self-

* The foot-note references to books in this article, are to former publications of the Author; wherein some of the principles of the present work have been stated and defended.

respect, and higher taste for the comforts and decencies of life among the people themselves. It is only a moral and voluntary restraint that should be aimed at, or that can be at all effectual; the fruit, not of any external or authoritative compulsion, but of their own spontaneous and collective will. This is evidently not the achievement of a day, but the slow product of education, working insensibly, yet withal steadily and surely, on the habits and inclinations of the common people; begetting a higher cast of character, and, as the unfailing consequence of this, a higher standard of enjoyment; the effect of which will be, more provident, and hence, both later and fewer marriages. Without this expedient, no possible enlargement of the general wealth can enlarge the individual comfort of families; but, as in China, we shall behold a general want and wretchedness throughout the mass of society. With this expedient, no limitation in the way of further increase to our wealth will depress the condition, though it will restrain the number of our families; but, as in Norway, we shall behold the cheerful spectacle of a thriving, independent, and respectable peasantry.

But though our main object has been to exhibit such proofs and illustrations as may have occurred to us for the establishment of this position; and though we do not profess to have unfolded in our volume, Political Economy, according to the forms, and in the nomenclature of a science; yet a political economy, such as it is, may be gathered out of it. We may not have accomplished the regular construction of a system, be it right or

wrong, but we have at least furnished the materials of one; and we conclude with a brief exposition of its leading principles and peculiarities.

1. The division of the labouring population into the agricultural, the secondary, and the disposable. It presents many new and important relations in the science of political economy. No ground will be cultivated, (unless by the interference of some artificial and compulsory legislation,) that is not at least able to feed the agricultural population employed on it, and their secondaries. Hence the higher the standard of enjoyment is among the people at large, the greater will be the secondary, and the less will be the disposable class; or corresponding to this, the greater will be the wages, and the less will be the rent, while, at the same time, the more limited will be the cultivation, because of the larger produce that will be required from the soil last entered on, to feed the larger number of secondaries.*

2. That the great aim of every enlightened philanthropist and patriot, is to raise the standard of enjoyment; even though it should somewhat lessen the rent, and somewhat limit the cultivation. That there must be less food raised in virtue of this narrower cultivation; and hence, a somewhat narrower society. But that this, with general comfort among the families, is vastly preferable to a more numerous society, with all the consequent miseries of an over-peopled land.

3. That there is no other method by which

* "Extent and Stability of National Resources," to be republished in the next volume of our series.

wages can be kept permanently high, than by the operation of the moral preventive check among the working classes of society; and that this can only be secured by elevating their standard of enjoyment, through the means both of common and Christian education.*

4. That however menacing an aspect the policy, whose object is to raise the condition of the working classes, may have on the interest of the landlords, by encroaching on the rent of land—yet they have every security for a great and growing revenue notwithstanding. Such, in the first place, is the strength of the principle of population, that there is no danger but wages will be kept sufficiently low, and cultivation be carried down among the inferior soils sufficiently far. And besides, every improvement in the methods of husbandry, by lessening the agricultural population needed for the work of farms—and every improvement in the powers of manufacturing industry, by lessening the population needed for preparing the second necessaries of life—will serve to increase the disposable population who are at the service of the landlords, and, along with this, the rent out of which this third class of labourers is maintained. The improvements which are ever taking place in the powers of labour, will greatly more than countervail any diminution, effected by the moral check, on the number of labourers. Or, in other words, the standard of enjoyment may rise, and yet the income of landlords rise along with it. Human

* "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation," being the XIV. XV. and XVI. Volumes of the Series.

industry, aided by human skill, is ever becoming more productive; and, from this cause, if workmen will only assert and make good their own proper share of the increased produce, there are abundant means for the comforts both of the proprietors and of the general population being enlarged contemporaneously.*

5. That high wages are not necessarily confined to the period when the wealth of society is in a state of progressive increase; and neither does it follow, that, when this wealth has attained its maximum, and become stationary, the wages of labour must be low. That it remains in the collective power of labourers to sustain their wages at as high a level in the ultimate, as in the progressive stages of the wealth of a country. That the moral preventive check on population can achieve and perpetuate this result; but that nothing else will do it.

6. That in every country, where the laws are efficient and equitable, and the people are industrious, the cultivation of the soil will, under the guidance of personal interest and enterprise, be carried to the extreme limit of its being profitable. That, in these circumstances, to enter on a scheme of home-colonization, is to extend the agriculture beyond this limit; or, in other words, to enter upon soils which will not repay the expenses of their cultivation. That such a process can only be upheld by taxation, or by turning so many of the disposable population either into agrarians or secondaries. That the process reaches its ulti-

* "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

matum, when the last man of the disposable population, withdrawn from the preparation of luxuries, is converted into an agricultural or secondary labourer. That this implies a state of things, when the whole rent of the land is absorbed in the expenses of a pauperism, now accumulated to the uttermost. That by the time when such a consummation is reached, and probably long before it, the landowners, loosened from all interest or care in their estates, would abandon the administration of them. That when once the tie of property was broken, there would ensue an immediate dissolution of society. That the occupiers or labourers on the inferior soils, now deprived of the essential support, which, through the medium of their proprietors, they drew from the superior ones, would turn, in violence, on the more fortunate occupiers of the better land. And finally, that, whatever temporary respite society might obtain from a scheme of home-colonization, it is a scheme which, if persisted in, must have its final upshot in the most fearful and desolating anarchy

7. That this contemplation suggests two distinct limits—one, the extreme limit of a profitable, another, the extreme limit of a possible cultivation. That, by abstaining from schemes of pauperism, and, instead of these, giving the whole strength and wisdom of government to the best schemes of popular education, we shall keep within the former limit; and, with an untouched disposable population, whether for the luxury of proprietors, or for the public objects of a sound and enlightened patriotism, we may have, at the same time, the

general population in a state of respectable comfort and sufficiency. But if, transgressing the former limit, we enter, with our home-colonists, on unprofitable soils, and so make way towards the latter limit—from that moment, in thus making room for a larger, we are on the sure road to a greatly more wretched society than before; and degrade throughout the condition of the working classes, while we at once impoverish the landlords and enfeeble the state, by trenching on the disposable population.

8. That no trade or manufacture contributes more to the good of society, than the use or enjoyment which is afforded by its own commodities; hence the delusiveness of that importance which has been ascribed to them, as if they bore any creative part in augmenting the public revenue, or as if, apart from the use of their commodities, they at all contributed to the strength or greatness of the nation; and hence, also, the futility of the common distinction between productive and unproductive labour.*

9. That although commerce re-acted most powerfully on agriculture at the termination of the middle ages, so as to introduce a new habit of expenditure among the landlords, and mightily to extend the cultivation of land—yet, now that the habit is firmly and fully established, we are not to imagine, though any given branch of trade or manufactures should be extinguished, that it will sensibly throw back the agriculture. For that no proprietor would let down the cultivation of his

* "Extent and Stability of National Resources."

estate, because the failure or fluctuation of particular trades had placed beyond his reach some of his wonted enjoyments. That he would still be at no loss for objects on which to spend his income; and that, therefore, a large income would be as much his earnest aim and his felt interest as before.

10. That there is, therefore, a misplaced and exaggerated alarm connected with the decay or the loss of trade. That the destruction of a manufacture does not involve the destruction of the maintenance now expended on manufacturers; and that the whole mischief incurred by such an event would be to them a change of employment, along with a change of enjoyment to their customers; after which, we should behold, in every country subsisted by its own agricultural produce, as large a population as well maintained as before.*

11. That they are chiefly the holders of the first necessaries of life, or landed proprietors, who impress, by their taste and demand, any direction which seemeth unto them good, on the labours of the disposable population.

12. Grant but industry and protection, and then capital will be found to have in it as great an increasing and restorative power as population has; and that any policy for fostering, or any fears for the decay of the one, are as chimerical as the same policy or the same fears in reference to the other; and that capital can no more increase beyond a certain limit than population can.†

* "Extent and Stability of National Resources."

† "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

13. That the diminution of capital, occasioned by excessive expenditure, whether public or private, is not repaired so much by parsimony, as by the action of a diminished capital on profits; and that the extravagance of government or of individuals, which raises prices by the amount of that extravagance, produces only a rotation of property, without any further diminution of it, than what arises from the somewhat higher rate of profit, which an increased expenditure brings along with it; and which higher rate of profit must, to a certain extent, limit the cultivation of land.

14. That trade is liable to gluts, both general and partial; that no skilful distribution of the capital among particular trades, can save the losses which ensue from a general excess of trading; and that the result is the same, whether the undue extension has taken place by means of credit, or from an excess of capital.

15. That the rate of profit is determined by the collective will of capitalists, just as the rate of wages is by the collective will of labourers—the former, by the command which they have, through their greater or less expenditure, over the amount of capital; the latter, by the command which they have, through their later or earlier marriages, over the amount of population. That by raising or lowering, therefore, the standard of enjoyment among capitalists, profit is raised or lowered; that, in this way, both classes may encroach on the rent of land, and share its produce more equally with the landlords.

16. That when the agricultural produce of a

country is equal to the subsistence of its population, its foreign trade is as much directed by the taste, and upheld by the ability, of its landed proprietors, as the home-trade is.*

17. That it is not desirable that the commerce of Britain should greatly overlap its agricultural basis; and that the excrescent population, subsisted on corn from abroad, yield a very insignificant fraction to the public revenue.†

18. That, nevertheless, there should be a gradual relaxation of the corn laws, and ultimately a free corn trade—with the exception of a small duty on importation, for the single purpose of a revenue to government, by which to meet the expenses to which it is subjected, from the addition made by the excrescent to the whole population.

19. That the abolition of their monopoly in corn, would not be injurious to the British landlords; saving that the increase thereby given to the value of money, might create an inequality between them and the fundholders—which inequality, however, could be rectified, by means of an adjusted taxation.

20. That, probably, a free corn trade would not burden the country with a large excrescent population.

21. That Britain has little or nothing to apprehend from the loss of her colonies and commerce; but that a change of employment to the disposable

* "Extent and Stability of National Resources," and "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

† Ibid.

population, and of enjoyment to their maintainers, would form the whole result of it. And that though, historically, foreign trade did, at the termination of the middle ages, stimulate agriculture, yet that now, under all the possible fluctuations of trade, there is perfect security for the cultivation of land, on to that point at which it ceases to yield any surplus produce to the landlord.

22. That, with the exception of their first brief and temporary effect on wages and the profits of circulating capital, and of their more prolonged effect on the profits of fixed capital—all taxes fall upon land; the interest of its mortgages being included.

23. That this doctrine, though now regarded as one of the exploded errors of the French economists, should not share in the discredit attached to their school—if upheld by other reasonings, and made to rest on other principles, than those of the economists. That the grounds on which our conviction in this matter is established, were never once recognised by these economists—that is, the dependence of wages on an element over which labourers, collectively, have the entire control—we mean population; and the dependence of profit on an element over which traders, collectively, have the entire control—we mean capital.

24. That, to estimate the whole effect of taxes upon land, we should add to the effect of them, in aggravating the expenditure of landlords, the effect of them in lessening their receipts. That every tax which bears on the profit or maintenance of the agricultural capitalists, and which bears on the

wages or maintenance of the agricultural, and their secondary labourers, and, generally, which enhances the expenses of farm management—creates a deduction, *pro tanto*, from the rent. That, for the commutation of all taxes into a territorial and funded impost, there would be a full equivalent to the landlords—first, in the lessened expenses of their living; and, secondly, in the enlarged rent of all the land now under cultivation. And that they, over and above, would obtain more than an equivalent, in the new rent which would accrue from the more extended cultivation of their land, now unburdened of all those taxes by which the cultivation had formerly been limited.

25. That the effect of tithes, in contracting the agriculture of a country, is the same with that of taxes on capitalists, or labourers, or the instruments of husbandry; and that the abolition of both would, in the first instance, enlarge the comforts of the general community; but, at last, would prove exclusively a boon and an enlargement to the landlords.

26. That tithes and taxes ought not to be abolished, but commuted, as there ought to be a more liberal provision for the various branches of the public service; and, more especially, for the support of the literary and ecclesiastical establishments, the endowment of which is indispensable to high scholarship, and to the full Christian instruction of the people.*

27. That the extreme limit of taxation is the

* "On the Use and Abuse of Literary and Ecclesiastical Endowments."

landed rental of the kingdom; and that, were taxation carried to this limit, it would place the great bulk of the disposable population in the service of the state.

28. That the capabilities of the nation for defensive war are greatly underrated—they being at least commensurate to the extent of the disposable population.*

29. That the superior influence of Britain over other nations in distant parts, is due to her exports; and that if, instead of her lighter manufactures, she had to export raw produce, her power in offensive war would be lessened, while she might continue as strong in defensive war as before; and that, therefore, the balance of power is a topic of needless and misplaced anxiety on the part of British statesmen.

30. That the national debt is tantamount to a general mortgage on the land of the kingdom, and that it has occasioned no diminution of capital—the absorption of capital by the government loan of any particular year, being replaced next year by the operation of the diminished capital upon profits.

31. That if the expenses of a war are raised within the year, they do not enhance general prices; but that, in as far as they are defrayed by loans, prices rise, and so that the excess upon the whole is equal to the sum borrowed.†

32. That the national debt is therefore a double

* "Extent and Stability of National Resources."
† "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation."

burden upon the community, having been already paid once in the excess of those higher prices which are consequent upon each loan; and to be paid a second time, either by a perpetual interest, or by the liquidation of the principal.

33. That the nation is as able to pay the expense of any war by taxes within the year, as by taxes and loans together—seeing that, in point of fact, it does pay the loans within the year too, in the higher prices which these loans have occasioned.

34. That the law of primogeniture is essentially linked with the political strength, and other great public interests of the nation.

35. That, on the whole, no enlargement of our economical resources will suffice for the wants of a population, who are under no moral or prudential restraint on the increase of their numbers. That the effect of each successive addition to the means of our subsistence, will, in that case, be only a larger, but not a more comfortable or better-conditioned society. That however numerous, or however successful the expedients may be, for adding to the amount of national wealth—they will be nullified, in point of effect on the sensible comfort of families, by the operation of but one expedient more, which shall ensure a proportional, or beget a tendency towards greater than a proportional, addition to the national population. That a law of compulsory relief for the poor is precisely such an expedient; and that so long as it is in operation, every other device which philanthropy can suggest, or even an enlightened political eco-

nomy can sanction, will turn out to be futile and abortive.*

36. That but for this disturbing force, which so unsettles the providential habits of the people, and so undermines every principle, whether of nature or Christianity, to the spontaneous operation of which the care of the poor ought always to have been confided—society might undergo a very speedy amelioration. Because that a very small excess in the number of labourers, effects a very large and disproportionate reduction in the price of labour; and therefore, by a reverse process, it might only require a very insignificant fraction of relief from the numbers of the people, to operate a very large relief on their circumstances and comforts. That emigration for the lessening of the number, and the various other economical expedients for the enlargement of the means, will be of but slight and temporary effect, so long as the law of pauperism shall maintain the population in a state of perpetual overflow. But that, if these were related to a scheme for the gradual abolition of the pauperism, they would smooth the transition from a system of compulsory, to one of natural and gratuitous relief; after which, it were in the power of common, and more especially of Christian education, indefinitely to raise the habits and tastes, and, along with these, to raise the economical condition of the people.

* "Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation," and Pamphlets on Pauperism, *passim*.

THE

SUPREME IMPORTANCE

OF A

RIGHT MORAL TO A RIGHT ECONOMICAL STATE OF THE COMMUNITY:

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON A RECENT CRITICISM

IN THE

EDINBURGH REVIEW.

(FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1832.)

PREFACE.

We are now aware of at least ten different reviews on a work entituled, "Political Economy in connection with the Moral State and Moral Prospects of Society," and of these the majority are hostile to the principles of the Volume.*

Yet, in the following Pamphlet, we have singled out the article in the Edinburgh Review, as the only subject of our reply.

Our main reason for this is, that the Journal now mentioned still adheres to the Malthusian doctrine of Population; so that its opposition is more confined to such tenets as are peculiar to ourselves: whereas the other adverse criticisms of any weight, from the standing and authority of the periodicals in which they appear, all proceed on the assumption of that doctrine being erroneous; and hence, are rather directed against the views of Mr Malthus, than against those which are properly our own.

That the rate at which Population would in-

* We have since seen the "British Critic," which concurs with us in the main lessons of our work.

crease, if the adequate means of subsistence were at all times within reach, greatly exceeds the rate at which the means of subsistence can increase, with all the aids and practicable openings, which either the mechanical arts, or the sound and liberal policy of governments could afford to human labour—we have long regarded as a position, founded both on the widest possible experience, and the clearest possible demonstration. This is the one doctrine, which—whether in respect of evidence by observation, or of deduction by reasoning—is more like a truth in mixed mathematics, than any other doctrine in the philosophy of human affairs.

Such being our strong convictions on the side of Mr Malthus, we could not but lay our account with the strenuous opposition of all who differ from him. And this opposition, come when it may, was sure to be an impassioned one. The controversy in fact has long, in regard to all essential principle, been exhausted; and has now become a contest of feeling, rather than a contest of argument. Were it but a hostile conviction that stood in the way of the Malthusian doctrine, one might hope for the removal of it. But the case is different, when, instead of this, it is the revolt of pained and irritated sentiment, which, so far from being allayed, is exasperated the more, in very proportion as the lights of arithmetic and experience are made to shine upon the question. One might know how to manage a mere resistance of the understanding. But when it is resistance in the shape of a sensitive antipathy, it becomes more

difficult to deal with. We might regret it. But we do not well see how we can redargue it.

The likest thing to it which we recollect, in the history of human controversies, is the state of parties, on that celebrated question in moral science—'the Liberty of the Will.' There is such a semblance, at least, of irrefragable reasoning, on the side of those who affirm the progressions of the mental, to be as certain and necessary as those of the material world—as, if not to have persuaded, at least very much to have provoked their antagonists. There is, we believe, in many instances, an honest apprehension for the interests of virtue; and hence, a moral indignation against the doctrine of necessity—all the more vivid, in proportion to the strength of that argument by which it is supported. And it is even so with the recent, and not yet generally received doctrine of population, which, whenever it is proposed, comes into conflict with an amiable, though we think mistaken solicitude, for the interests of humanity—an instant repugnance of the heart against what is resented and recoiled from as a cold-blooded speculation.

But there is another species of resentment, less pure and generous in its origin, under which it is possible that a reviewer may be tempted to commit an act of injustice. It not unfrequently happens, and more especially in an age when the Politics and the Political Economy have such a reciprocal influence in moulding and modifying each other; insomuch, that a doctrine in the science is often made the Shibboleth, or the watch-

word, of a party in the State,—that a leading Journal, at once the organ and the representative of all its adherents, signalizes itself by some favourite principle, of which it undertakes the championship; or by some specific of healing virtue for the distempers of the nation, of which it becomes the ostensible and the declared patron. It is thus that no science, perhaps, is placed in circumstances more unfavourable for the calm and dispassionate investigation of its doctrines, than Political Economy; nor can we imagine an influence more darkening and disturbing, or one more unfriendly to the progress of sound opinions—than when, amid the heats, whether of commercial or civil partizanship, each important question is made the signal for lighting up a fierce and interested warfare. The mischief is greatly exasperated, when a journal of high authority has embarked its credit on some noted project or panacea for the evils of our social condition; and whether it be Home-colonization, or a scheme of modified Pauperism, or an organized system of Emigration to distant lands, which its conductors have set their hearts upon—they will not submit, without a struggle, to be told of the futility of all these expedients; and even truth itself will have the aspect of a Gorgon in their eyes, if, under its withering glare, their fond visions of philanthropy, and the devices of their profoundest wisdom, are laid prostrate in the dust.

But what the precise cause may be of the misrepresentations which we have suffered from the hands of certain journalists, it is needless to in-

quire. It is enough for our immediate purpose, that we state, in one or two sentences, what a few of these misrepresentations are.

The first is, that under the exclusive power of one dominant and monopolizing conception, we have overlooked those great and prosperous enlargements, which may take place in the economic state of a country, apart from that moral influence of education, which they would have us represent, as being, not only of paramount, but of sole efficacy, in determining the condition of a people. Now, not only do we admit the successive and continuous additions, which are being made every year, to the riches and resources of our nation, but we rejoice in contemplating, how much, in this way, is still in reserve for us; and, more especially, do we venture to recommend certain practicable steps, as the commutation of Tithes and Taxes, the gradual abolition of the Corn Laws, and even, with certain modifications, a plan of national and organized Emigration; whereby to obtain a further postponement, or breathing time, from that extreme pressure, which we fear to be the ultimate destination of every people, abandoned to the recklessness of their own habits, and unprovided with a good and adequate educational system, for pervading the whole mass of the community, both with the culture of knowledge and the culture of principle.

The second misconception under which our interpreters seem to have laboured is, that all our reasonings proceed on the assumption of this ultimate pressure being now at hand, in the shape of

a felt and palpable evil. Whereas, they would regard it, for the present at least, as but a shadowy bugbear; which, if ever to be realized, stands from us at the distance of many centuries; to which remote futurity we may safely adjourn all our anxieties, for a right adjustment between the population and the food of the world. But here they have forgotten what we certainly have been at pains, however unsuccessfully, to inculcate upon our readers, that, for the effect of general and severe pressure, it is not necessary to wait till the food of the world shall have reached its extreme limit, and till its still advancing population shall be continuing to urge itself onward against a then stationary barrier. That there may be a felt straitening throughout the families of a land, it is enough, if the rate of increase in the population shall exceed the rate of increase in the means of their subsistence; so as to effect a pressure against a barrier, that is receding too slowly for the purposes of a free movement. It is thus that the philosophy of Malthus might find an exemplification, not in the last stages of the world's history alone, but throughout all its stages; and, most certainly, it is thus that, at every period, whether late or early, in the annals of our species, the people, if better morally, would have been better economically. There is no country on the face of the earth, that, even in its brightest season of rapid prosperity and progress, would not have enjoyed a larger sufficiency and comfort at the time, as well as a more permanent continuance of these to more distant ages, had the chief care of its

government been the establishment of such an education, as might have secured for the land, that richest of all blessings, the formation of a humanized and well-taught peasantry.

But, thirdly, the most subtle, and perhaps, therefore, the most inveterate of all the delusions, on the part both of our readers and expounders, is—that, to school the people for that specific Malthusian result, which we hold to be so desirable, they would need to be specifically instructed in the Malthusian lesson, on the subject of population. We know not whether it be for the purpose of ridicule, or from sheer misconception, that this unintelligent view has sometimes been given of our argument. The design of education is to elevate man, intellectually, and morally, and religiously, to a higher state than before; and, for the accomplishment of this general object, it is not necessary to go beyond the ordinary topics, whether of common or Christian scholarship. It is not at the bidding of the economist, that the people will be led to abstain from improvident marriages; or, indeed, to make any change whatever on their practical habits. But, what the people will not do at the bidding of the economists, they will, if once raised and transformed by the power of education, do, in obedience to their own higher tastes, and in conformity to the wider range which they can now take of their interests, whether in the present, or in the future world. A general and wished-for result, may be the fruit of a general concurrence on the part of men, not one of whom

shall have made that result the object of his distinct aim, or even of his distinct contemplation. It is enough, that each shall act wisely and virtuously for himself. The aggregate effect of a population, somewhat lightened in their numbers, and greatly raised in their economical condition, would be the sure result of an efficient system of education; although neither teachers nor taught ever looked to aggregates, and both were alike unconscious and innocent of Political Economy.

For the settlement of all other misunderstandings, between us and our critics, we must refer to the Pamphlet at large; in which, we have attempted a close examination of the strictures that have appeared against us in the "Edinburgh Review,"—the journal which, of all the others, we find, in the present instance, the easiest to deal with—and precisely because itself deals in the best and strongest arguments. We do not feel disposed to make any return, and, least of all, a return in kind, for the contemptuous, or the wrathful, effusions, of the London Periodicals; whereas, the definite statements and reasonings of our compatriot, can be met by counter-statements and counter-reasonings of our own.

We had hoped, at the commencement of our present effort, to have comprised within the pages of a moderate pamphlet, a full answer to the article in the Edinburgh Review. But we have felt it necessary to confine ourselves to the discussion of such questions as are more of a practical character; and have reserved, for a brief post-

script, the succinct treatment of certain matters, which more properly belong to Political Economy, considered as a science.

In the Preface to our work, we stated, that we were not sanguine either of a general, or of an instant reception for its doctrines, and laid our account with its novelties being long disregarded or derided as paradoxes. The vigour and vehemence of the opposition that we have raised, does not therefore surprise us; while there is nothing, at the same time, in the character of that opposition to make us despair. Had we been discouraged by the incredulity of others, we should long ere now have given up our peculiar views on the question of Pauperism. But neither their resistance, nor their ridicule, could prevail against our own experimental verification of them. And there is one evidence, experimental too, which so grows and multiplies with the lapse of time, as may at length become palpable to themselves—not the evidence of our practical success, but of their own practical discomfiture. They have been attempting long, and are attempting still, their endless modifications on the Pauperism of England; but the radical and inherent mischief of the system is more and more every day making head against them, and preparing the way for a lesson which they should have learned long ago—that it is a system not to be regulated, but destroyed. They resolutely support, and we fear will be powerful enough to carry their own favourite scheme of Pauperism for Ireland; and the signal aggravation of all its miseries, which they will thereby bring

on that unhappy land, must throw additional light upon the question. They are even tampering with the pure and virtuous economy of Scotland; and, one after one, have they immolated many of its parishes to a system, which is nowhere introduced without inflicting the sorest deterioration both on the comfort and character of families. Let us hope that this unfailing and oft-repeated experience will at length open their eyes. And as to experience we confide the verification of our very obnoxious doctrine on the subject of Pauperism—to the same do we confide the verification of our equally obnoxious doctrines on the subject of Political Economy at large. They are precisely such as admit of being thus tested, of being either ratified or refuted by the history of future years,—whether we affirm of a Poor Law, that, viewed as an expedient for the relief of distress, it is a positive and unmixed evil; or of all the other merely economic expedients for the same object, not that they are evils, but that at best they afford only a fleeting and temporary good, soon to be neutralized by a cause, whose deadly mischief nothing else can countervail, save a thorough education of the people. Let all these expedients be tried, successively, or together, and what we have ventured to predict is, that none of them will avail for a permanent lightening of our pressure. It is not Home-colonization that will do it. It is not the largest practicable conversion of Revenue into Capital. It is not the greatest possible enlargement of Foreign Trade. It is not the Repeal of the Corn Laws. It is not the more equal division

of Property. It is not the abolition of Tithes or Taxes. And, finally, it is not Emigration. We think that, beforehand, and by the lights of science, one and all of these measures are traceable to their results; and we have endeavoured so to trace them. In our conclusions, we have run counter to many of the fond imaginations of projectors. Experience will decide the question betwixt us; and whether, if without an extensive moral and educational reform, the future history of Britain—marked, on the one hand, by the outbreakings of a straitened and distempered population—on the other, by the manifold, but abortive attempts of the Legislature to rectify their condition—will not lend a melancholy confirmation to all our views.

THE

SUPREME IMPORTANCE

OF A

RIGHT MORAL TO A RIGHT ECONOMICAL

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY.

Should an influential journal pronounce an adverse judgment on the views of an author, it is possible that the cause of truth may suffer for a time—more especially in an age, when reviews are much, and books are little read. This will all the more surely happen, if the subject in question be a science of wide and multiplied combinations; presenting, even on the first slight and partial regards that we may chance to bestow upon it, many glances, or imposing likelihoods of truth, which can only be dissipated by a careful and comprehensive survey of the matter in all its bearings; and therefore requiring, for the adjustment of its controversies, a far more lengthened and laborious argumentation than is at all suited to the patience or the taste of ordinary readers. The

peculiar danger in these circumstances is, either that they will take up with the first plausibility which offers—or that, receiving their opinions upon trust, they will, at all hazards, prefer the brief sketch of the reviewer to the elaborate treatise of the author; and the more, that the proper vocation of the former is to be the guide of public sentiment, whereas the latter may either be comparatively unknown, or may have been guilty of a rash incursion on a science which does not belong to him.

The article in the Edinburgh Review, on a work entitled, "Political Economy in connection with the Moral State and Moral Prospects of Society," is written in an obvious spirit of kindness and good-will to its author. It is free of all asperity; and, in the absence of this distasteful ingredient, one can attend to its reasonings, without any of the moral discomfort that is incurred by the perusal of a coarse and boisterous invective. Our only discomfort is, that, in return for so much courteousness, we should, in justice to our subject, have to state any instance, in which the writer of it has either erroneously misconceived or inadequately represented us. He has been pleased to say of the work, that it is calculated to do extensive good, by the attention to its various and important topics which it must necessarily awaken. But it were too much to expect of any readers, that they should listen for a moment to an author, convicted either of ignorance or oversight in the first and fundamental principles of his reasoning; and far more, that they should accompany him on

a toilsome pathway, to those ulterior conclusions, in which he has either deviated from his predecessors, or gone beyond them—after they have been made to believe, on the authority of a journal high in talent and general reputation, that he is incompetent, and uninformed even in those simpler elements, which may be said to form the very alphabet of the science.

It is rightly stated in the review, that the great object of the work, is but the establishment *of one lesson*, or "one leading idea,"* even the superior importance of a Christian education, over every other expedient which the most enlightened Political Economy can devise, for a secure and permanent amelioration, in the condition of the labouring classes. But it is quite obvious, that this lesson cannot be fully or conclusively made out, without the satisfactory treatment of many other distinct lessons, which must, of necessity, go before it. A comparison is instituted between one thing and many things. But, to execute this aright, there must not only be a just estimate of the power and quality of the one thing whose superiority is affirmed; there must also be a just estimate of the power and quality of the many other things wherewith it is compared. And so there come to be as many distinct lessons, as there are acts of comparison. And, accordingly, for the execution of our task, the chief expedients which politicians or economists have proposed, for bringing about a larger sufficiency in the state and circumstances of the general population, come

* Page 53 of the Review.

successively under review; or, in other words, a wide survey must be taken of the leading doctrines in Political Economy. Doubtless, the concluding proposition is one; but it can only be arrived at by a series of anterior propositions. Or, to express it otherwise, there is in the work but one generic proposition; but it includes many special propositions, each of which requires to be discussed separately; and, in doing this, we have to pass from topic to topic, as distinct, the one from the other, as are the chapters which they respectively occupy. Of these topics, the reviewer has selected but a small number for special animadversion. We reserve for another place the adjustment of our differences on such matters as are strictly scientific;* restricting ourselves here, to the notice of any such misunderstandings, or errors, as may have arisen betwixt us, regarding the degree of *economic* importance which should be ascribed to the general and Christian education of the people.

But, before we begin our closer reckoning upon the subject, it may be right to notice one peculiarity, which serves to mark and to characterise the whole of the critic's performance. We mean the manner in which he keeps up the style and show of controversy, even on questions where we are substantially at one; so as often to hold forth the semblance of opposition, at the very time that there is no real or essential difference betwixt us. Perhaps the very nature of our leading proposition lays it peculiarly open to such a virtual mis-

* See the Postscript.

representation; while the hurried way in which the reviewer hath obviously collected his brief and scattered notices of the work, makes it quite consistent with our firm belief, that no misrepresentation was intended. Our proposition is, the superiority of one expedient over all others, for the economic well-being of a community. We rejoice that, in a work of so much authority as the Edinburgh Review, this superiority is distinctly admitted; it being the frequently expressed sentiment of that journal, that "good education is at once the *best* security for the public tranquillity, and for the *permanent* improvement of the mass of the people."* After this, we are at a loss to perceive, how, on our main position, to which all the others are subservient, there can be the remnant of a controversy; save on the very indefinite charge, which, in every question of degrees, it is so easy to make, and so difficult, if not impossible, to settle—that we lay *too* much stress on education, or have formed *too* high a conception of its powers. But the superiority of one expedient, implies the inferiority of all others; and here the reviewer hath afforded us the advantage of a charge quite definite and precise in the terms of it; for, instead of ascribing to us too limited an opinion of the efficacy of these inferior expedients, he would have us to affirm that they possess no efficacy at all. "Neither the repeal nor abolition of the most burdensome taxes or regulations, nor the discovery of new machines or processes for reducing the cost of production, can, in his estimation,

* Page 53 of the Review.

be of any real service."* Now it so happens, that not only have we zealously advocated these and many other measures of economical improvement and reform; but, in the estimate that we offer of the many important benefits which they render to society, we have had the good fortune to instance, and that repeatedly, as the most signal of them all, that which the reviewer also insists upon, and for the ostensible purpose, too, of supplementing our deficiency. After pleading for the removal of all taxes from the commodities which are in general use, we state the effect of such a reform to be, that "it lets forth the agriculture, instead of contracting it. The people are translated into better circumstances; and they may be taught in the season of intermediate abundance, to have a permanently higher demand for the enjoyments of life than before. They may be raised to a higher status; and of that status they may be enabled to keep the permanent occupation, in virtue of their higher standard of enjoyment. Were the economical only followed by a moral enlargement, then, instead of a brief evanescent holiday for the people of our land, the whole platform of humble life may be elevated, and made to sustain an erect, and independent, and prosperous commonalty, to the most distant ages." Those successive enlargements, on which the reviewer expatiates at great length, and as if we had wholly overlooked them, are distinctly, and, on different occasions throughout the volume, pressed on the attention of the reader. "And this is a precious

* Page 54 of the Review.

use of the enlargements which are still before us, and by which the families of the land are translated for a time from extreme misery into a state of comparative ease. They then become fitter subjects for education, than when sunk in the distress and desperation of abject poverty. When viewed in the light of absolute or ultimate resources, we have no great value either for the removal of prohibitions from the corn trade, or for the removal of tithes and taxes from agriculture, or, finally, for emigration. But when these expedients are viewed in the relation of subserviency to the education of the people, (because they afford a temporary lightening of the pressure that is now upon their families, and, along with this, a spirit, and a leisure, and a means, for their moral and literary culture,) in this light, they may prove of incalculable service to the good of humanity." It were not easy to discover where the difference lies upon this part of the subject, between the writer who could pen these sentences, and the writer who tells us of the beneficial effect of these enlargements in "the time that is afforded for the formation of those improved habits that are of such essential importance;"* and who, after describing the improvements which he supposes to have taken place in our land during the last half century, expresses his firm conviction, that their "beneficial influence would have been materially increased, had they been accompanied by an increase of moral culture;"† and, finally, who admits as at least highly desirable, if not indispensable, "a good system of

* Page 55 of the Review. † Page 64 of the Review.

public instruction, operating simultaneously with a fall in the price of necessaries or a rise of wages."* With such common elements of thought, one might have looked for a better understanding between the parties. But, perhaps, it belongs to what may be termed the mannerism of the profession, that the reviewer should still be appearing to refute the sentiments of his author, at the very time that he only reiterates or re-echoes them; and it may be really as difficult for the former, to depart from the habitual attitude proper to his vocation of a censor and a judge, even when there is nothing to find fault with, as it is unfortunate for the latter, that, with a correction as indiscriminate as it is unsparing, he should be alike the object of hostility for the opinions which he does, and for those which he does not entertain.

This characteristic tendency of the reviewer, this continued maintenance on his part, of the air and general style of an adversary, even when there is no substantial ground for it, pervades, and, we doubt not, unconsciously to himself, the whole of his criticism; but is nowhere more remarkably exemplified, than in his treatment of the difference betwixt us, partly apparent, as we hope to show, and partly real, respecting the standard of enjoyment. It is strenuously affirmed in the review, and as if in opposition to the work, that the people of Scotland are better fed, clothed, and lodged, than they were in the days of their forefathers. With certain modifications, which we shall endeavour to supply, there is no mistake whatever in

* Page 71 of the Review.

this assertion. The mistake lies in bringing it forward as corrective of any error into which we had fallen; an error, it is affirmed, which "has arisen from our laying too much stress on the principle of population, as explained by Mr Malthus."* Now it so happens, that, instead of contrariety between the author and his reviewer upon this subject, there is the most precise and remarkable coincidence; for, at the outset of his work he combats this very error, and as the error too of those who did lay too much stress on the principle of population; or who, by reasoning on the element of population alone, had "given in to certain conceptions which required to be modified;" and who, in consequence, described the process that took place in the history of the world to be such, as if, at each successive step, "the comfort and circumstances of the human race underwent deterioration." We expressly affirm of this process, that it "is not accordant with historical truth;" and are at some pains to explain, in opposition to the ultra-Malthusians, why it was that we did "not witness throughout the various countries of the world the successive degradation of their peasantry,"—but rather, "a general march and elevation in the style of their enjoyments,"—"an undoubted rise in their circumstances, or in the average standard of their comfort." We afterwards speak of the gratifications which were placed by an opening and augmenting commerce, "within reach of the peasantry, and were every where raising the standard of enjoy-

* Page 54 of the Review.

ment." This is but one of those instances in which the reviewer hath fallen into the remarkable mistake, of reiterating the sentiments of the work, at the very time that he conceives himself employed in refuting them,—only to be accounted for on the theory of a hasty composition, after a very hasty and imperfect perusal.

But a mistake in regard to the meaning of an author, is of less consequence than a mistake in regard to the subject of which he treats. The standard of a people's enjoyment is made up of several elements; and one of the most essential of these, the reviewer has altogether neglected. He has taken account only of the larger maintenance of the people; he has taken no account of their now larger and greatly more aggravated labour. Had he given himself time for a fuller view of their common subject, it would have brought him and his author more thoroughly at one. We agree with him in thinking, that our workmen, on the whole, "live better;" and if he will agree with us in thinking that they "labour more" than their ancestors, then this part of the controversy might be altogether cancelled; and, respecting the "change of habit which has actually taken place in modern Europe," there might be a perfect community of sentiment betwixt us.

As this pamphlet may fall into the hands of some who may not have read the larger work, or are unwilling to encounter the labour of its perusal, we shall, in the following brief extract, put them in possession of our sentiments upon this subject:—

'The actual and historical process that has taken place, we believe to be as follows. The labourers of our day work harder than before, but live better than before. They put forth more strength, and receive more sustenance than they wont to do. There has been an increase on both of these terms: or, such has been the change of habit among workmen, that while greatly more industrious, they at the same time have become greatly more luxurious. They at once toil more strenuously, and live more plentifully; putting forth more strength, but withal, drawing the remuneration of a larger and more liberal sustenance. This we apprehend to have been the actual change of habit and condition which has taken place with artisans and labourers, in all the countries of civilized Europe,—so that while, on the one hand, we behold a harder working peasantry, we, on the other hand, behold them more richly upholden, both in the first and second necessaries of life.

"Now, this may be either a deterioration or an improvement in their circumstances. One can imagine a day of slavish fatigue, followed by an evening of gross and loathsome sensuality,—as is often exemplified in the life of a London coal-heaver, whose enormous wage is absorbed in the enormous consumption, by which he repairs the waste and the weariness of an excessive labour. This surely is not a desirable habitude for the commonalty of any land,—nor do we read the characteristics of a high or a well-conditioned peasantry in a state of existence, made up, first of drudgery to the uttermost of their strength, and then of grovelling dissipation to the uttermost of their means. They spend one part of their revolving day in the exercise of powers which are merely animal; and the other part in the indulgence of enjoyments, which also are merely animal,—like beasts of burden, who are more worked than before, and, in return for this, are better fed and lodged and littered than before. They are now in better keep than their forefathers; and this puts them into heart for the greater work that is extracted out of them. Still it is conceivable of the work, that it may be so very extreme, as, on the whole, to degrade and to depress these overdone children of modern industry,—and that, in spite of the greater abundance wherewith their senses and their spirits are

coarsely regaled, during the intervals of their sore bondage."*

Had our reviewer, instead of the few slight touches which he has bestowed upon the subject, entered into its depths and its details, with a labour of examination somewhat more commensurate to its importance, it would have greatly qualified the flattering representation which he has given of what is going on at the basement of society. He would there have found a progressive accumulation of wretchedness; and that, too, from the constant increase of numbers which is taking place, year after year, in the *lowest class of labourers*—men who, if of more varied physical tastes than their forefathers, are, in that very proportion, at a more hopeless distance from a state of tranquil and satisfied enjoyment—more ravenously bent on animal gratifications than before; but forced, by overwhelming competition, so to labour for their attainment, as, on the whole, to have fallen greatly beneath the standard both of comfort and character that was realized by the peasantry of Scotland, amid the simpler and purer enjoyments, but withal the longer intervals of repose, with the more frequent opportunities for reflection and reading, as well as social happiness, of a generation that has now gone by. Even though, in respect to the amount of *materiel* which entered into the use and consumption of their families, the computation was (what in many thousand instances it is not) entirely in their favour—when the extreme and oppressive drudgery of their

* Pages 10—12 of the Work.

over-worked callings is admitted into the reckoning, it will be found of a rapidly augmenting multitude in our land, that they are becoming every year lower economically, as well as lower morally and intellectually, than before. In other words, instead of British society resting on the goodly foundation of a more thriving and substantial peasantry than at any former period, there lies, concealed from the observation of the reviewer, and underneath that platform which he has spread out before the view of his readers, a strength of profligacy and pauperism together; to reach and neutralize which, political economy can do no more than recall the blunders of its own erring disciples; and against which nothing will fully or conclusively avail, but the power of Christian education.

Such is our general representation, in opposition to that of the reviewer—substantiated by facts which he has not stated, and to be accounted for by reasons which he has entirely overlooked.

Of these facts, which could be multiplied without end, we deem it better to select one or two of the most decisive, instead of fatiguing the patience of our readers, by repeating the similar communications which might be had from all parts of the empire. The following is the statement of a gentleman most minutely and statistically acquainted with the subject of his narrative; and we hold it all the more valuable, that it is the testimony, not only of one who had the best opportunities of observation, but whose representation, being a plain record of circumstances, that might be verified by the experience of thousands, is unvitiated

by any economic theory. We therefore offer no apology for presenting it in full.

"Paisley is perhaps the most plebeian town of its size in Europe—its population being composed chiefly of weavers, with such accompanying trades and occupations as are dependent upon, or necessary for, the supply of weavers and weaving apparatus. From its proximity to Glasgow, Paisley can boast of few extensive manufacturers, many of its operatives being employed by Glasgow houses, through the medium of resident agents; and, having few home or foreign merchants of any note, it presents the extraordinary feature of an almost entire working population. As some important practical results, both of a moral and political nature, may be drawn from a review of its past and present history, it is our intention in the present article, to take a cursory view of the *weaving*, in other words, the general population of that town, from about the year 1775, or 80, to the present day; contrasting its moral and intellectual character at two or three distinct periods, and endeavouring to account for the sad declension in public manners, which, of late, has been so obvious to the country at large.

"To state the simple fact, that the *once* quiet, sober, moral, and intelligent inhabitants of Paisley, are now, generally, a turbulent, immoral, and half-educated population, is to state what almost every one knows, what many mourn over, but for which few seem able to propose any remedy.

"It is indeed a melancholy subject for contemplation, that what was at first eagerly embraced by many as an addition to their family receipts, has, ultimately, proved not only a chief cause of individual poverty, but of family feuds, insubordination on the part of the children, and, as a natural consequence, a general moral degradation over the whole community. We allude to the practice, introduced about the year 1800, (when the manufacture of imitation Indian shawls was first commenced,) of employing children as draw-boys, from the early age of five or six, to ten or eleven years,—a period of life, till then, uniformly spent in school, or in youthful amusements, but, subsequently, from a rapid increase in this branch, all the available children are employed in the weaving-shop.

"From about 1770 to 1800, the manufactures of silk gauzes and fine lawns, flourished in Paisley; as also, during a portion of this period alluded to, that of figured-loom and hand-tamboured muslin. These branches afforded to all classes excellent wages; and being articles of fancy, room was afforded for a display of taste, as well as enterprise and intelligence, for which the Paisley weavers were justly conspicuous. Sobriety and frugality being their general character, good wages enabled almost every weaver to possess himself of a small capital; which, joined with their general intelligence and industry, enabled and induced many to spend days, and even weeks, together, in plodding over a new design; assisted frequently by his obliging neighbours, knowing that the first half-dozen weavers who succeeded in some new style of work, were sure to be recompensed tenfold.

"Nearly one-half of Paisley, at that period, was built by weavers, from savings off their ordinary wages. Every house had its garden; and every weaver being his own master, could work it when he pleased. Many were excellent florists; many possessed a tolerable library, and *all* were politicians; so that, about the period of the French revolution, Mr Pitt expressed more fear of the unrestricted political discussions of the Paisley weavers, than of 10,000 armed men. Had Paisley been then what Paisley is now, crowded with half-informed Radicals and Infidels, his fears would have been justified; but truth and honest dealing could fear nothing from a community constituted as Paisley then was; and never, perhaps, in the history of the world, was there a more convincing proof of the folly of being afraid of a universal and thorough education, especially when impregnated with the religion of the Bible, than in the state of Paisley at that period.

"At the period alluded to, every man, woman, and child above eight or nine years of age, could read the Bible; many could write and cast accounts; and not a few of the weavers' sons went through a regular course at the Grammar School. To have had a distant relative unable to read, or one sent to prison for stealing, would have been felt as equally disgraceful.

"The inhabitants were so universally regular in their attendance upon church, and strict afterwards in keeping in-doors, that

it is recollected, at the end of the last century, or commencement of the present, that not a living creature, save two or three *privileged blackguards*, were ever seen walking the streets after divine service; or if any chanced to appear, an errand for the doctor was supposed to be the probable cause. Family duties were generally attended to; and prayer and praise were not confined to the Sabbath evening; for on week-days, as well as on Sabbath-days, the ears of the by-standers were regaled with songs of praise issuing forth from almost every dwelling; and, in those days it was no uncommon thing to find the highly respectable weaver a most consistent and truly useful elder of the church.

"At that period, the honest quiet *Whig* or *Tory* weaver, might be seen with his wife, at four or five o'clock, sallying forth on an evening walk, in full Sabbath attire; the husband, in advance of his wife, carrying the youngest child in his arms, and his wife following, with two, three, or four, older children; and, perchance, ere their return, a brother and sister-in-law were honoured with a visit to a cup of tea, to which they experienced a hearty welcome. Nor were little luxuries on such occasions altogether unknown; a weaver then being able to afford them.

"Although early marriages were very common, yet the frequent attendant evils were not immediately felt; a lad of 18 or 20 being quite as able to support a family as his father at 40; and he did not anticipate those days of darkness and privation, which have since come on Paisley.

"We come now to the mournful cause of the present degraded state of that once moral and happy town; not that we imagine that the fluctuations of trade, arising from the change from a war to a peace system, have not affected that town in common with others; but these fluctuations would have passed over it with comparatively little injury, but for the operative cause we are about to mention, which wrought its sure though silent influence upon the manners, habits, and morals, of the general population.

"The introduction of the manufactory of imitation Indian shawls, about the year 1800, required that each weaver should employ one, two, or three boys, called draw-boys. Eleven to

twelve was the usual age, previous to this period, for sending boys to the loom; but as boys of any age above five were equal to this work of drawing, those of ten were first employed, then, as the demand increased, those of nine, eight, seven, six, and even five. Girls, too, were by and by introduced into the same employment, and at equally tender years. Many a struggle the honest and intelligent weaver must have had, between his duty to his children and his immediate interests. The idea of his children growing up without *schooling*, must have cost him many a pang; but the idea of losing 2s. 6d. or 3s. per week, and paying school wages beside, proved too great a bribe even for parental affection, and, as might have been expected, *mammon* in the end prevailed, and the practice gradually became too common and familiar to excite more than a passing regret. Children grew up without either the education or the training which the youth of the country derive from the schoolmaster; and every year, since 1805, has sent forth its hundreds of unschooled and untamed boys and girls, now become the parents of a still ruder, more undisciplined, and ignorant offspring. Nor was this all. So great was the demand for draw-boys, that ever and anon the town-crier went through the streets, offering, not simply, 2s. 6d., 3s., or 3s. 6d. a-week for the labour of boys and girls, but bed, board, and washing, and a penny to themselves on Saturday night. This was a reward on disobedience to parents—family insubordination, with all its train of evils, followed. The son, instead of standing in awe of his father, began to think himself a man, when he was only a brawling impudent boy. On the first or second quarrel with his father, he felt he might abandon the parental roof, for the less irksome employment of the stranger. The first principle of all subordination was thus early broken up; and the boy who refused to hearken to the voice of his father or his mother, and to honour them, could not be expected, when he became a man, to fear God, or to honour the king. If ignorance be the mother of superstitious devotion, it is also the mother of stupid and vulgar contempt. An intelligent and moral people, will ever be most ready to give honour where it is due; and, respecting themselves, will yield a willing respect to intelligence, virtue, rank, and lawful authority, wherever it is placed.

"The increase of the family receipts, arising from the employment of one or more children as draw-boys, ceased on the first slackness in the demand; for it is evident that the additional sum, we shall suppose of 5s. a-week, drawn by the labour of the weaver's children, enabled him to work just at so much lower prices to any manufacturer who might choose to speculate in making goods at the reduced price, in the hope of a future demand. A short period of idleness on the part of the weavers would have given time for the overstock of goods to clear off, whereas this practice of working even extra hours during the period of a glut, tended to perpetuate the glut, or to render fluctuations arising from this source more frequent, and, along with other causes, to perpetuate low wages. Thus was the employment of their children from five to ten, by the weavers of Paisley, at first an apparent advantage, but in the end a curse; demonstrating, that whatever may appear to be the interest of parents this year or next year, it is permanently the interest of them and their offspring to refuse every advantage in their temporal concerns, which tends to defraud youth of the first of parental blessings, EDUCATION, and that Providence has bound in indissoluble alliance, the intelligence, the virtue, and the temporal well-being of society. In 1818–19, during the Radical period, there were found full three thousand, Paisley-born and Paisley-bred, who could not read; and the decline of intelligence has been followed by the decline of that temperance, prudence, and economy, which are the cardinal virtues of the working classes; by which alone they can elevate their condition, or preserve themselves from sinking into the most abject poverty.

"The Paisley weaver of forty years ago married early, because he foresaw that he could, in decency, support a family, and even save something for sickness, or age, or the fluctuations of his trade. The Paisley weaver lad, in 1832, marries equally early, on a pittance that scarcely supports himself; because he has neither judgment to reflect on the misery which he is entailing on himself and others, nor moral principle to feel the solemn obligations of the state into which he is entering. Had the population of this town continued a well-educated, religious population, and, as wages diminished, intelligence and virtue had

increased, the fall of wages would have been arrested by the natural operation of that prudence, which leads mankind to consult their duty as well as their inclinations; and, without any knowledge of the principles of Malthus, the operative classes would, like the middle and upper classes, have acted on his principles. It was the practice of the old Paisley weaver, after an attachment was formed, and an engagement entered into, to interpose sometimes a delay of years in the labour of collecting their *providing* or *plenishing;* that is, a most enormous mass of bed and table linen, an eight-day clock, &c., &c.; and it was a point of distinction on the day previous to marriage, by one or other of the parties, to exhibit to all the neighbours this accumulation of industry and economy. Will the clergy of Paisley inform us, how many marriages they now celebrate annually, where the parties have such *plenishing* to exhibit, with honest satisfaction, to their neighbours? Or rather, how many enter into the state of wedlock, without one thought of the future, and who know not, nor care not, what they do?

"Those who have no consideration concerning the things of this life, are not likely to have any forethought regarding the life to come; and just in proportion as the modern Paisley weaver is without religion, does he despise it. All clergy are necessarily hypocrites, as all kings and magistrates are, in their estimation, tyrants. Unitarianism, infidelity, or reckless profanity, too generally abound; and the popular cry is against all church establishments, however much demanded by the poverty and irreligion of their own town; and against all distinction of ranks. Thus, measuring themselves by themselves, they would reduce society to their own level. Paisley thus furnishes an affecting illustration of the declaration of Holy Writ, 'That righteousness exalteth a city; but sin is the ruin of any people.'"

We should have but injured the graphic power and fidelity of this precious document, by attempting to abridge it. We have therefore given it entire.* Although rich in principle, a vast deal

* That is, the writer's description of the present, as contrasted with the former state of Paisley. But he has subjoined to it a

more of instruction may be gathered from the study of it, than we have immediate occasion for. The following are the only remarks which it is necessary for our purpose to offer :—

First, it will be seen, that the standard of enjoyment does not lie exclusively in the more plentiful use of those merely tangible articles of consumption which compose the maintenance of a household. The parent who treats himself every week with some holiday enjoyment—who appears regularly at church in his respectable Sabbath-day attire—who pays for seat-rents and schooling to his family—who, instead of consigning them almost from infancy to a life of slavish and severe labour, can afford them a free, happy, and well-educated boyhood,—such a man, even though his children may run bare-footed, and he himself lives on coarser fare, or in a more homely dwelling than would satisfy an English peasant—beside being greatly higher in the moral, should also have a higher place assigned to him in the economic scale. Still the reviewer is right in the virtue which he ascribes to circumstances, though he has made his usual mistake, in supposing that we had not adverted to it. " The law, the commerce, the industry, the Protestantism, (even in a population destitute of schooling,) the advanced civilization, have elevated the habits and state of the general community in Eng-

scheme of restoratives or remedies—all of which, as being moral remedies, are in perfect keeping with our main argument. It is right to add, that the narrative here given first appeared in a Glasgow newspaper, entitled ' The Scottish Guardian,' distinguished by its sound principles, and the able enforcement of them both on ecclesiastical and economical subjects.

land." Apart from the education of letters, there is an education of habits—not we mean the habits of religion or morality, but those of mere civilization, such as comfort, and cleanliness, and certain points of decorum, in which perhaps our Southern neighbours have still the precedency. The Scottish peasantry had the tastes and preferences of a higher sort—though rapidly falling, and more especially in towns, from this distinctive superiority. Even taking the standard of enjoyment in its grosser and more ordinary sense, we have just witnessed in one of these towns a most remarkable depression; and we shall presently see how far England, as well as Scotland, shares in it.

It is altogether a fair comparison which the reviewer hath instituted, between the education of circumstances, and the education of letters; but, had he taken a still more comprehensive survey of the question, he might have greatly strengthened the demonstration which he has given, of the impotency of the latter, when standing alone and unassociated with other influences. There is a third and a higher education than either of the other two—and that is, the education of principle. It is obvious, from the narrative which we have just presented, that the descent which took place in the condition of the operatives in Paisley first began with a surrender of principle—the unworthy sacrifice of their children, for the sake of an immediate and tempting gratification. It is not reading, but reading as subservient to religion and morality, that elevates the economic state of a people. We fear that this principle has not only

been omitted by the reviewer, but overlooked, nay contravened, by our rulers in high places—when enacting, with the most perfect honesty of intention, we trust, for the relief and amelioration of unhappy Ireland. There may be a superficial and apparent, but really there is no substantial analogy, between the system of education proposed for Ireland—and that which is still in vigorous operation throughout the country parishes of our own land. We look for no sensible or general improvement in character, and of course no secure or permanent improvement in their economic condition—"if that is merely to be the education of letters, and not the education of principle. It is not scholarship alone, but scholarship impregnated with religion, that tells on the great mass of society. We have no faith in the efficacy of mechanic institutes, or even of primary and elementary schools, for building up a virtuous and well-conditioned peasantry, so long as they stand dissevered from the lessons of Christian piety. There is a charm ascribed to the scholastic system of Scotland; and the sanguine imagination is, that by importing its machinery into England and Ireland, it will work the same marvellous transformation there, on the character of their people, that was experienced amongst ourselves. But it is forgotten, that a warm and earnest Christianity was the animating spirit of all our peculiar institutions, for generations after they were framed; and that, wanting this, they can no more perform the function of moralizing the people, than skeletons can perform the functions, or put forth the faculties, of living men. The scholastic

is incorporated with the ecclesiastical system of Scotland; and that, not for the purpose of intolerance and exclusion, but for the purposes of sanctifying education, and plying the boyhood of our land with the lessons of the Bible. The scholarship of mere letters might, to a certain extent, have diffused intelligence amongst the people; but it is mainly to the power and presence of the religious ingredient, that the moral greatness of our peasantry is owing."

But recurring once more to the fond exaggerations of the reviewer, respecting the improvement which has taken place in the condition of the people, "and especially during the present century"*—we cannot imagine a more striking contrast between a high-coloured representation and a sober reality, than that which obtains in the present instance, between the speculation of the economist, and the plain, practical statement of the eye-witness. It makes no good evasion to say, that this is but an isolated example, taken from the history of one town, or one community. The reviewer is too well versant in the first elements of economic science, not to know—that if, in virtue of an over-proportion of people to their employment, its wages have fallen in any one place, a depression will be felt in all other places which have the like misfortune; so that if, notwithstanding this tendency to equalization of wages, the depression still continues, it can only arise from a similar over-population and distress, in all parts of the empire that are similarly situated. Neither is

* Page 57 of the Review.

it a good evasion, to ascribe this phenomenon to the influx of Irish into the West of Scotland. It is not in flowering or fancy-work, or any of the finer manufactures, but in the departments of simple and unskilled labour, that the people of our own land are most exposed to the weight of their competition. The truth is, that the great mischief under which Paisley now suffers, has been chiefly, if not altogether, of home-growth; or rather, the decay which has fallen upon its working classes, is chiefly, if not altogether, by a home-process of degeneracy. Even in those cases where the competition of the Irish has been of most direct and manifest operation, as in simple weaving, or in the ruder kinds of hand and field labour, they have but aggravated those evils, which had their beginning in the recklessness of our own population; and, if not arrested, will have their fearful increase, and at length their crisis of destruction and anarchy. It is the distinct exhibition of this in the history of Paisley and its manufactures, which makes the narrative that we have now quoted so peculiarly instructive—at once proving, that the distress is wholly resolvible into moral causes, and wholly irrecoverable but by moral remedies. Altogether it affords a striking verification, though only in miniature, of our doctrine of limits; and shows how little could be done, or rather how much the suffering would have been enhanced, either by the investiture of more capital, or the engagement of more labour, in a trade that had already exceeded the possibility of an adequate return for its outlays A resolute moral principle

on the part of workmen could alone have prevented the catastrophe. A like moral principle, and nothing else, can fully and permanently recover it.

In the labour of mere handiwork, or where the requisite skill could be easily attained, and at the expense of a very brief apprenticeship, the depreciation of wages has been still more general. The days were when the muslin weavers of Glasgow earned, and for lengthened periods too, from 20*s.* to 24*s.* and even 30*s.* a-week. But these days have not occurred for about twenty years; nor are they ever expected to return. The invention of the fly-shuttle, by which the work has become incomparably lighter, so far from brightening this prospect, has made it greatly more hopeless. It has now become a female employment; and the competition is frequently so overdone, as to bring down the whole remuneration of an individual weaver, to the wretched pittance of 4*s.* or 5*s.* a-week. When so high as 8*s.* or 10*s.*, being about one-third of what had sometimes been earned twenty years before, the weavers rejoice as in a season of comparative prosperity; though often alternated by long and dreary intervals of depression, during which, to keep a family in existence, the strength of all its members is sometimes put to the severest requisition. Instances often occur, where the same loom is kept all the twenty-four hours in unremitting activity, the man and wife taking their turns at these labours of the midnight oil to relieve each other; and thus to make out, between them, one of those halcyon days, which,

we are taught to believe, have shone with such peculiar brightness on our population since "the commencement of the present century," so as to be without a parallel in the previous history of Scotland.

We greatly wish that our reviewer had made himself acquainted with the details presented to public notice, by Dr Kay's able pamphlet, on "The moral and Physical condition of the Working Classes employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester;" not the excogitations of any fanciful theory on either side of a question, but the sober realities of a minute and statistical survey. He would there have learned a juster estimate than he has himself given of the variations which have taken place in the standard of enjoyment; and may have become convinced, perhaps, of the inseparable dependence which a soundly economical, has on a soundly moral state of the community at large. More especially, it may have led him to admit another element into his computation of the standard of enjoyment, that would have most essentially affected, and, perhaps, entirely reversed, the conclusion which he has himself arrived at, even the magnitude of that labour by which all the higher feelings and faculties of the mind are overborne; and man is degraded into an animal, or rather, into a mere piece of living enginery, where the vital principle may be regarded as but the moving force, the bones and muscles, as the levers and traces of a peculiar mechanism. No wage, however liberal, for repairing the expenditure of human strength, can recon-

cile us to the forfeiture of all human comfort and dignity that must be incurred by those wretched victims of modern industry, of whom we have an account in the sickening representation that follows:—

"The population employed in the cotton factories rises at five o'clock in the morning, works in the mills from six to eight o'clock, and returns home for half-an-hour or forty minutes, to breakfast. This meal generally consists of tea or coffee with a little bread. Oatmeal porridge is sometimes, but of late rarely used, and chiefly by the men; but the stimulus of tea is preferred, and especially by the women. The tea is almost always of a bad, and sometimes of a deleterious quality; the infusion is weak, and little or no milk is added. The operatives return to the mills and work-shops until twelve o'clock, when an hour is allowed for dinner. Amongst those who obtain the lower rate of wages, this meal generally consists of boiled potatoes. The mess of potatoes is put into a large dish, melted lard and butter are poured upon them, and a few pieces of fried fat bacon are sometimes mingled with them, and but seldom a little meat. Those who obtain better wages, or families whose aggregate income is larger, add a greater portion of animal food to this meal, at least three times in the week; but the quantity consumed by the labouring population is not great. The family sits round a table, and each rapidly appropriates his portion on a plate, or they all plunge their spoons into the dish, and with an animal eagerness satisfy the cravings of their appetite. At the expiration of the hour, they are all again employed in the work-shops or mills, where they continue until seven o'clock, or a later hour, when they generally again indulge in the use of tea, often mingled with spirits, accompanied by a little bread. Oatmeal or potatoes are however taken, by some, a second time in the evening."

——— "The population nourished on this aliment is crowded into one dense mass, in cottages separated by narrow, unpaved, and almost pestilential streets, in an atmosphere loaded with the smoke and exhalations of a large manufacturing city. The operatives are congregated in rooms and work-shops during twelve

hours in the day, in an enervating, heated atmosphere, which is frequently loaded with dust or filaments of cotton, or impure, from constant respiration, or from other causes. They are engaged in an employment which absorbs their attention, and unremittingly employs their physical energies.* They are drudges who watch the movements, and assist the operations of a mighty material force, which toils with an energy ever unconscious of fatigue. The persevering labour of the operative must rival the mathematical precision, the incessant motion, and the exhaustless power, of the machine.

"Hence, besides the negative results—the total abstraction of every moral and intellectual stimulus—the absence of variety—banishment from the grateful air, and the cheering influences of light, the physical energies are exhausted by incessant toil, and imperfect nutrition. Having been subjected to the prolonged labour of an animal—his physical energy wasted—his mind in supine inaction,—the artizan has neither moral dignity, nor intellectual nor organic strength to resist the seductions of appetite. His wife and children, too frequently subjected to the same process, are unable to cheer his remaining moments of leisure. Domestic economy is neglected; domestic comforts are unknown. A meal of the coarsest food is prepared with heedless haste, and devoured with equal precipitation. Home has no other relation to him than that of shelter, few pleasures are there; it chiefly presents to him a scene of physical exhaustion, from which he is glad to escape. Himself impotent of all the distinguishing aims of his species, he sinks into sensual sloth, or revels in more degrading licentiousness. His house is ill furnished, unhealthy, often ill ventilated, perhaps damp; his food, from want of forethought and domestic economy, is meagre and innutritious; he is debilitated and hypochondriacal, and falls the victim of dissipation."†

But there is a discrimination to be made here, be-

"* A gentleman, whose opinions on these subjects command universal respect, suggests to me, that the intensity of this application is exceedingly increased by the system of paying, not for time, but according to the result of labour."

† Dr Kay's Pamphlet, pp. 8—11.

tween one set of these wretched beings and another, which, had it occurred to the reviewer, might have helped him to a sounder conclusion respecting the actual standard of enjoyment among labourers. We shall explain it to the reader, as it will both extricate him from the delusion into which our critic hath been betrayed, and enable him, as we shall afterwards see, to account for the existence of it.

There is a distinction commonly made by economists between the remunerations due to unskilled and to skilled labour—the one often greatly inferior, as being simply a recompense for the exertion of muscular strength; whereas, over and above this, the other is a recompense for acquired dexterity, beside including in it a return for the time spent in making the acquirement. This partly explains the difference of wage between a hand-loom weaver, and a cotton-spinner, but it is far from being an adequate explanation of the whole difference.

The difference lies greatly, and we think principally, in this:—In the weaving department, the outlay of the master manufacturers consists entirely of wages; or if, to be extremely accurate, we include in the sum given to the operatives, the replacement and profit of the capital vested in the looms, they are the operatives themselves, generally speaking, who advance this capital, and who would bear all the loss of its becoming unproductive, during the cessation of work. Now the reverse of this obtains in cotton-spinning. The humble machinery of a hand-loom belongs generally to the workman, or at least, which is the same in ef-

fect, not to his employer. The ponderous and expensive machinery of a cotton-mill does belong to the employer. He makes a partial outlay in wages, but a prodigious outlay in capital. Let us suppose him to be the proprietor of an establishment, on which he has embarked a capital of twenty thousand pounds; and has, farther, to make a yearly advance of wages to a hundred individuals. According to a common estimate on the subject of manufacturing capital, he would need to have ten per cent. or two thousand a-year, to repay him for the first outlay; so that, should there be a strike among his workmen, he not only foregoes all the profits that might still remain to him, even though he submitted to their terms, but he incurs a loss at the rate of two thousand a-year into the bargain. His capital, while it remains dead and useless, is, for the time at least, as good as taken away from him; and it is in the power of workmen, at all times, to inflict this calamity upon their employer. When they stand out for a rise of wages, it must with him be a serious question, Whether he should not submit to their terms, and give, for example, an additional thousand in wages, rather than lose double that sum upon his machinery, and quit besides, all hope or possibility of gain, from that profession, on which perhaps he has embarked his all, and from which he draws his livelihood. Whether matters proceed to a combination, and a manifesto, and a strike, on the part of workmen or not —these are considerations which are at all times of influential effect, in determining the rate of wages; and in every manufacture where a large

fixed capital is required, they do give to workmen a strong virtual control over the masters who employ them. In weaving, the loss incurred by the cessation of work, and therefore the stagnation of capital is small, and falls upon the workmen; in cotton-spinning it is large, and falls upon the employer.

This gives rise to a very wide and distant variety in the circumstances and condition of different classes of operatives. In Glasgow, when the weavers earn only 5*s*. a-week, the cotton-spinners may earn between 20*s*. and 30*s*. In the present year, it appears from the valuable Statistical Enumerations of Dr Cleland of Glasgow, that the cotton-spinners have, in some instances, been earning 28*s*. a-week. The principle is perhaps most distinctly and strikingly exemplified of all—when the wage of an operative, working at his own hand-loom, is brought into juxtaposition with that of an operative working among the power looms of his master: when the earnings of the former amount to 5*s*. or 6*s*. a-week, the earnings of the latter may be from 20*s*. to 25*s*

Although Dr Kay is inclined perhaps to ascribe too much to a temporary, without adverting to the permanent cause, for this difference in the wages —yet, for the sake of farther confirming the fact, that such a difference exists, we take the liberty of presenting one extract more from his instructive little work.

"The wages obtained by operatives in the various branches of the cotton manufacture are in general such, as, with the exercise of that economy, without which wealth itself is wasted, would

be sufficient to provide them with all the decent comforts of life—the average wages of all persons employed in the mills (young and old) being from nine to twelve shillings per week. Their means are too often consumed by vice and improvidence. But the wages of certain classes are exceedingly meagre. The introduction of the power-loom, though ultimately destined to be productive of the greatest general benefit, has, in the present restricted state of commerce, occasioned some temporary embarrassment, by diminishing the demand for certain kinds of labour, and, consequently, their price. The hand-loom weavers, existing in this state of transition, still continue a very extensive class; and though they labour fourteen hours, and upwards, daily, earn only from five to seven or eight shillings per week."*

We might collect innumerable testimonies from England, on the distempered state of its operative population. But we shall only instance the almost universal cry from its manufacturing districts, in behalf of the Factory Bill—a cry extorted from a suffering population, by the monstrous evils which that measure promises, but we fear vainly promises, to remedy. It is a wretched principle on which to compute the standard of enjoyment—merely to make arithmetical computation of the whole gains of a family; and that without any discount or deduction for the enormity, unheard of till these modern times, of children from nine years old, and upwards, doomed to fourteen hours every day of confinement and hard labour, amid the dust, and the steam, and the dizzying sounds, of a crowded manufactory. It is a melancholy outlook for the next generation, that, with so large a portion of England's boyhood, the first openings of moral and intellectual nature should thus be subjected to the

* Dr Kay's Pamphlet, pp. 26, 27. See Evidence of Joseph Foster before the Emigration Committee, 1827.

killing influences of a base and brutalizing servitude. Mr Sadler has done good, by the appalling disclosures to which his investigations have given birth; as every man does, who adds to our store of facts on any question that is interesting to humanity. But, with all his benevolence and rectitude of purpose, we dare hardly hope for any further services from his hands. That is truly a bungling legislation, which seeks to obtain its object by what mathematicians would term, a compensation of errors; which, on the one hand, would, by the artificial influence of a poor-law, foster population—and, on the other, by the artificial restraint of a penal statute, would lay an oppressive interdict on the unavoidable consequences of its excess. And so its proposal now, is to violate the parental rights of the people of England; and this to neutralize its own unhappy blunder—of having lured them, in supernumerary thousands, into the parental relationship, by the hope, which it can never realize—or rather, by the engagement, which it never can make good—of indefinite harbourage and support for all actual and all possible families.

On this question, too, our doctrine of limits receives a signal illustration. Mr Hoole, in his letter to Lord Althorp, tells him, that

"If Mr Sadler's bill becomes a law, the masters will have the choice of two evils. Either they must reduce the hours of labour to the limit proposed to be fixed for children, (fifty-eight hours per week,) or they must place their establishments without the pale of this enactment, by discharging all persons under eighteen years from their factories."—"In the former case, a reduction of the *wages* of all persons employed, whether children or adults, corresponding with the reduction of the time of labour, must in-

evitably take place."—"Not a few of the master cotton-spinners have determined to adopt the other course above mentioned; namely, to *discharge* from their employment all the hands under eighteen years of age, as soon as the proposed law comes into operation."

It is thus that England, with her ever-teeming philanthropy, has placed herself in a dilemma that seems inextricable—in what is familiarly termed, *a cleft stick*. After that capital has done its uttermost for the population, we find the latter borne down by the oppressive weight of their own numbers, and in the midst of intolerable grievances. When, for the redress of these, law would put forth its coercions, capital is then forced to look to itself, and threatens to cast off into utter idleness and destitution, those in whose behalf the state is now called on to interpose, for their protection from a system of grinding and oppressive labour. We are aware of the economic reforms, by which both capital and population may, for a brief season, be relieved of their difficulties; but to be again brought, if there be no moral regeneration in the country, into the very state of distress and extremity in which we now behold them. Meanwhile, we fear, that law can do nothing, unless by going to the root of the mischief; or instituting a right system of education, and putting into a train of abolition the whole system of pauperism. It cannot force labourers to live without wages; it cannot force capitalists to trade without profit. But law, overlooking these truisms, attempts to make bricks without straw; and, in its vain endeavours to effect an adjustment between the two classes would lay this Egyptian bondage upon both.

But let us return once more to Scotland; and lest the argument, either of special manufactures, or of midway transitions from one state to another, should be alleged, in opposition to all our former instances—we shall now offer a brief view of the circumstances of our agricultural population, at the beginning of this century, and in the present day—assuming that the variation which has taken place in one of its counties, (Peebleshire,) is a fair average specimen of the change, if any, which the condition of our peasantry has undergone, over the whole length and breadth of the land. We, on purpose, keep clear of 1800 and 1801, as having been two years of severe scarcity, amounting to famine; so that the comparison, strictly speaking, is between the rate of wages now, and the mean rate of wages from 1802 to 1812 or 1814.

The wages of married farm servants—in as far as they are paid in kind, consisting of meal, potatoes, the keep of a cow, and driving of their fuel—have suffered no variation. The money wages at the former period were £16 a-year; they are now £10. We are aware that the price of the first necessaries of life has fallen in a greater proportion than this; but the money part of this wage goes to the purchase of second necessaries; and their price has not fallen in so great a proportion. So that the labourers of this description are somewhat worse off at the latter than the former period.

The wages of unmarried farm-servants were then £18, with their victuals, and are now £12, with victuals; they having suffered a descent too, though

less by 13*s.* 4*d.* than that of the former class of labourers.

But there is still another class, of inferior condition to the two former, and who also, as appears from the comparison of their wages at the two distinct periods, have sustained a greater descent than either of them—we mean the day-labourers, the job-men of England, or the *orry* men of our own country parishes, employed in the construction and repair of roads, and all the other varieties of ground labour. About twenty or twenty-four years ago, their allowance was from 10*s.* to 12*s.* a-week, with victuals, or from 16*s.* even to 18*s.* and 20*s.* a-week, without victuals. Their allowance at present is 6*s.* a-week with, and 10*s.* without victuals. But these numbers exhibit in both cases the full summer allowance; and, to estimate their yearly income, we must take into account the reduction of 1*s.* and 2*s.* a-week, when the days become shorter, as also the average of about two winter months, when they are totally without employment. A good practical test of the felt straitness in their circumstances, is the extreme fatigue they will undergo at piece-work, when, to eke out a sufficiency for their families, they are known to labour from four in the morning to eight at night; and it is the distinct testimony of the masters who employ them, that this is what those daysmen will do now, and would not have done twenty-five years ago. We might further state, that the services of a man, with two horses and single horse carts, could only be had at that time for 10*s.* or 12*s.* a

day—but now for 5*s.* or 6*s.* 6*d.* Wrights and masons, in short, all country artisans, with the exception of blacksmiths, have experienced a similar decline of wages; and a decline not countervailed by the greater cheapness of the second, and still greater cheapness of the first necessaries of life. By the general consent of practical and intelligent men, the peasantry of Scotland have not, at this moment, the same command over the various articles which enter substantially into the maintenance of families, that they had during the ten first years of the present century.

Two causes may be assigned for the glowing exaggerations of the reviewer, respecting the progress which he affirms to have taken place in the economic state of our people. It may be right that we advert, though briefly, to both of them—as they not only seem to have misled him, but are fitted to mislead many others, who are satisfied to make up their minds on a rapid and cursory view of the subject. The sketch which he has drawn of the internal state and history of Scotland, is one of great plausibility—yet it will not be difficult, we are persuaded, to evolve the actual state of the case, the sober reality of the question, from underneath that mantle of speciousness wherewith he hath garnished and overlaid it.

The first great error of the reviewer, then, lies in this—that he has generalized workmen of all sorts and varieties into but one object of contemplation. He has viewed them only *en masse*, without having adverted to the momentous distinction which obtains between one class of them and another

—between the men, for example, of high wages, in virtue of the control which they have over their employer, because they can at any time bring his large and expensive machinery to a stand; and the men who often have not a third part of the wages of the others, because they possess no such power—as weavers, all whose capital is a hand-loom, which is their own; or ground labourers, all whose capital is a spade, which is their own also. He reasons, as if the foundation on which society rested, was throughout of homogeneous materials: and then tells us, what a substantial foundation it is, and how it is consolidating every year into greater strength and firmness than before. We reason, as if that foundation was made up of successive strata, and express our apprehension that the lowest stratum of all might become every year more putrid and unsound, and so endanger the stability of the whole fabric. The work recognises a gradation in the branches of regular industry; and takes account of a large and ever-increasing body of supernumeraries at the bottom of the scale. The dashing generality of the reviewer does not admit of such discrimination. It confounds the cotton-spinner of 28*s*. with the poor weaver of 5*s*. a-week. It takes so distant a view of the object, that it comes not within sight of details and distinctions —though, in the instance on hand, of vital importance to all correct reasoning on the present state and future prospects of society. Like an unobservant by-passer through some plebeian district of a city, who never once dreams of the mighty gradation from the highest to the lowest of its

householders—though, intermingled with, or even contiguous to each other, the artisan or manufacturing operative, of from 20*s.* to as much as 50*s.* a-week, may be found in close juxtaposition with the weaver or the labourer, who but realizes an humble fraction of his gains. He overlooks this, and lumps or amalgamates them all, under the one denomination of the common people. And so, whatever comes from that quarter to the savings bank; or whosoever, out of the mighty hosts who congregate there, shall attend a mechanics' institute—he puts it all down to the general, or rather the universal elevation, that has taken place in the habits and comforts of those who overspread the ground-floor or basement of society. It is thus, that, in very proportion to the rapidity, the reckless, but withal confident, rapidity of those slight and transient regards which our reviewer has cast upon the subject—does he overrate, and that prodigiously, not the improvement of the lower, but the improvement of the lowest orders. He exults in the fifteen millions of deposits to the provident banks of the country; but reflects not on that multitude of mere labourers—the hundreds of thousands, who compose a distinct and inferior class, that are every year multiplying upon our hands, and who contribute not so much as one farthing to them. He has not entered at all into the depths or statistics of his subject; he has but looked on the upper surface of it—or, if reasoning on a sort of general average between the most comfortable and the most degraded of the industrious classes, reflects not, that beneath that aver-

age there is a gathering mischief, the inevitable tendency of which is to undermine the stablest community on earth, and to bring down the prosperity of all its orders.*

There is nothing that we have been more anxious to set forth throughout the whole course of our reasonings, than the effect even of a small excess in the labour-market, to ensure a great and general reduction in the circumstances and sufficiency of the whole body of labourers. The very existence of an order of men in the country, willing to live and to propagate on the most wretched fare and miserable wages, is first felt in the grade immediately above them, and at length extends through all the departments of industry. Whether the degradation of their tastes and habits arises from a stupid or a profligate recklessness, so long as it subsists, they will hang as a dead weight on the rear of society, and with a depressing power on the comfort and status of those who are above them. The operation is palpable, when brought about by the immigration of Irish labourers, though only amounting to a small fractional part of the working population in Britain; but it is not considered, that, by a home process, and through the neglected education of our own peasantry, the same effect is sure to follow on the undue multiplication

* It is of importance to keep in mind, that the worst paid of our manufacturing labourers in Glasgow are the most numerous. The number of workers, of all ages and both sexes, in the cotton and weaving mills of that city and neighbourhood, was 10,897, in April 1832. We wish that we could state the number of hand-loom weavers at the same period. But as far back as 1820, the number of hand-looms was upwards of eighteen thousand.

of families among ourselves. Apart from foreign influences altogether, there are causes at work within the island, which, if not met and counteracted, will issue in a grievous and general descent of wages, though not an Irishman should land upon our shores. There is a growing host of supernumeraries throughout the parishes of England, and in Scotland too, who overhang with a perpetual influence the labour market, and give a constant advantage to the employers of labour in all their negotiations with workmen; though it may only become manifest on those occasions, when, by means of the extra hands which can be so easily procured, they break the force, whether of righteous or unrighteous combinations. Now, the question is, whether shall we transform these modern Helots, which can only be done by a universal and Christian education, or shall we trust to the expedients of political economy alone; some of which, as the poor-law of England, and its home-colonizations, have only the effect of strengthening their habits, and perpetuating, nay, multiplying, their numbers? It is because of our distrust in all the resources of political economy, and our faith in the omnipotence of moral causes, both of which we have attempted, throughout the work in question, to vindicate, that we felt the conclusion to be inevitable, (a conclusion not at all shaken we think by the arguments of the reviewer,) that nothing will save the commonalty of a land from further degradation, or sustain them in prosperity and comfort, but a resurrection of better habits. And this can only be achieved and made

effectual, by an operation on mind and manners, reaching even to the meanest of the people.

The delusion into which the reviewer has fallen, by blending all the grades and varieties of common people into one general object of contemplation, has misled or bewildered the public mind on two great questions. In the question of pauperism, the apprehension is, that if the supplies of the existing system were done away, there would be nothing to replace them; and, in particular, that destitute families in the deep recesses of a city population, surrounded on all hands by others about as destitute as themselves, and placed beyond the observation and effective sympathy of those who had the power to relieve them, would inevitably perish. This is a very natural fear; but it proceeds on the imagination, that every plebeian district of a town is a dead level, of equal unmixed unalleviated, want and wretchedness. It is not recollected, how much *can* be done in every little neighbourhood by an internal operation of charity; and how much *would* be done, were it not that, by the attempt of law to supplement and supersede humanity, this operation has been paralyzed. We have to record it as our experience, after the close and personal observation of years, that never did a case of distress occur in the midst of a large and congregated mass of operatives, which was not followed up by the timely outbreakings of sympathy from the contiguous families; and, therefore, as our persuasion, that were human want confided to human benevolence alone, it would experience a far more copious, as well as kindly, circulation

of relief, than is poured upon it from without, by the ministrations of a legalized charity.

But if this habit of looking at things in the gross is fitted to mislead in regard to the economical, it is equally fitted to mislead in regard to the ecclesiastical, state of the people. If, from those quarters of the town which are occupied by the working classes, we behold a goodly attendance on mechanic schools, we augur well as to their general intelligence; and if, from the same quarter, we behold a goodly number issuing forth to their places of worship at the sound of the Sabbath-bell, we augur well as to their general Christianity. It is only by a laborious and statistical investigation, that those pleasing illusions are dissipated; and we come to the mortifying discovery of a vast and rapidly increasing multitude beyond the reach of both the literary and the religious institute—more fixed and irreclaimable every year in hopeless ignorance and hopeless heathenism. We speak in round numbers, but so as to understate the magnitude of this sore degeneracy. Of the ten thousand people in Glasgow, whom we did take account of, there might at least have been six thousand church goers. The actual number in attendance, on all places of worship, did not amount to three thousand.* Or, in other words, more than one-half of the people lived in habitual alienation from the decencies and observances of a Christian land. Let us now see how this bears on the

* Our survey included a population of 10,304. The number of Sabbath hearers ought to have been 6,240. The number of seats actually taken in all the churches and meeting-houses put together, was 2,930.

question of a religious establishment. If, without the peculiar resources of such an economy, the whole country may be supplied with Christian education on the system of voluntary churches—how is it that the immense suburb wastes of our commercial and manufacturing towns have not been overtaken? The field is open to the enterprise of all; yet beyond the limit at which the people are willing to erect a church and maintain a minister for themselves, it has not been entered on. It is on the needs and the exigencies of this outfield population, that the great argument both for a scholastic and a religious establishment rests. We would help on, both to common and to Christian scholarship, those of whom it is experimentally found that they will not help themselves. For their sake we desire an establishment; and would move in a direction the opposite of those who now meditate and would exult in its overthrow. Instead of consenting to its extermination, or even its abridgment, we would multiply its churches, and greatly subdivide its parishes.

But to return from this digression. The second great error of the reviewer, respects the enlargement which he affirms to have taken place in the economic state of the people of Scotland. He tells us of a rapid and remarkable advancement, without the influence of a better education too—and "especially during the present century."* Now, in this latter period, which he has selected, as one of extraordinary progress and prosperity, if the circumstances of our peasantry have experienced

* Page 57 of the Review.

a change, at all, they have suffered a decline; or at least, if stationary, this is the best which can possibly be said of them. All the testimonies which he has quoted in support of his own reasonings on this point, refer to the latter half of the last century, when Scotland did experience one of the most sudden transitions that ever took place in the internal economy of a nation—but such a transition, as, instead of being unfavourable or adverse to any theory of ours, is most strongly and strikingly corroborative of all our views. The truth is, that Scotland, during that brief period, and within her own narrow limits, exhibited, in epitome, the great movement which took place in Europe, between the middle and the modern ages. In a single generation, she may be said to have run the history of two centuries. The sudden start taken by her population, when the capabilities of her soil began to be unlocked after the rebellion of 1745; the almost impetuous career of her agriculture,* and, commensurate with this, the improve-

* There is a number of random assumptions on the part of the reviewer, which, for the sake of brevity, we omit to dwell upon. One example of this is his conclusion, from a sixfold produce, and only a double population for Scotland, that its labourers must therefore be in three times easier circumstances. He further misconceives wherein it is that the essence of good government mainly consists—not in the soundness of its political economy, but in its protection of the rights of property as constituted by law. Though Turkey had no commercial code whatever, still it would have a bad government—and the government of England is essentially good, in spite of all the econo ical blunders by which its code may be disfigured. The difference between a good and bad government is, that up to the existing limit of their produce and resources, the people are or are not in a state of secure enjoyment. The difference between a good and bad political economy is, that the limit is widened under the former, and contracted under the latter. We may further observe, that

ment which took place in the habits and condition of her peasantry; the awakening of the people from sloth to labour; the gradual augmentation of this labour to the present times, when the husbandry of our land begins to feel the impediments of its so much nearer approach to the extreme limit, and, along with this, our labourers begin to feel the impediments of a stationary and straitened condition; the obvious difference to the worse between the last and the present generation, in that, what then was prosperous without being oppressive industry, is now becoming the slavish and severe drudgery of men sinking under the competition of their own numbers, and who, therefore, have to put forth all their strength, in order to preserve the comfort which they have now acquired a taste for, and to maintain their wonted status in society:—all these hold out, in forcible representation, first, the indispensable dependence which the progress of wealth has on the progress of agriculture; and at length the difficulties which lie in the way of further augmentation—difficulties which are sure to increase, in proportion as any country advances towards that impassable barrier, which nature and necessity have laid in all countries, both on the food and population of the world.

the increase which he affirms to have taken place in the average length of human life, causes all the moral and prudential checks to be more imperiously called for; and lastly, that even though the people should have a larger amount of physical gratifications than in the days of their forefathers, yet if, along with this, habit have made their physical wants and appetites relatively greater than before, they may feel any addition of poverty or pressure more intolerable now than in any former period of their history.

The mistake of the reviewer, in his reasonings on the economical history of Scotland, is in perfect analogy with the mistake of those writers who reason in precisely the same way, on the process of transition from the middle to the modern ages of Europe, as if it were to be a continuous and universal process for all ages. They forget the wide difference between the state of things at the commencement, and after the full establishment and continuance of this new era. At the former period, the passion for wealth and luxury, then newly awoke, found a soil of boundless and yet unentered capabilities on which to expatiate; and the spirit of mercantile adventure on the one hand, and the unsated appetite of the landlords on the other, met, in the before untouched resources of the land, with the means of extended gratification. But it follows not, because of the progress that was actually described, at the time when large additional products could still be extorted from a soil whose capabilities had scarcely been entered on, that this progress may still be looked for, when agriculture, with its stationary, or slowly receding limit, has either reached, or is so much nearer, the uttermost limit to which it can be carried. The propelling force is in contact now, with an obstacle which stood then at a distance so remote, as to have permitted an advancing movement, and that a tolerably free one, for several centuries. But what happened in the incipient, cannot happen over again, in Scotland or any other country on the face of the earth, in the extreme state of agriculture; and accordingly, in the oldest

and richest countries of Europe, the sanguine, the splendid anticipations which the earlier experience had awakened, checked and chastised as they have been by the later experience, are now beginning to be abandoned.

The economical progress described by Europe at large, in two or three centuries, has been described by Scotland almost *per saltum*, or at least in one or two generations. The progressive state, so well represented by Smith, as the hearty and prosperous state for all classes of society, and more especially for labourers, which in some countries began so early, as now to have lasted for nearly half a millennium, has been described in Scotland with such large and rapid strides, that she has overtaken all her neighbours in half a century. Those blessings and benefits of *progress*, which have been dealt out so gradually to the rest of the civilized world, have here followed so speedily and closely on each other, as to have been condensed into a sort of quintessence for the people of Scotland. But, notwithstanding, we are now palpably beginning to participate in the difficulties of other lands; and it were as absurd to found our anticipations of the future on our recollections of the past, as to predict, for any of the old countries of Europe, the same mighty enlargement that we so confidently look for in the countries of the new world.

There are two distinct standards of enjoyment, both of them equally base and equally undesirable —the one, that which obtains ere the race of improvement commences; the other that, in which,

after the acquisition of many new tastes and appetencies, the race of improvement too often terminates. We have already offered a description of the latter;* and the former we now present in the following extract:—

"If this be the extreme to which the workmen of our present day are now tending, there is an extreme opposite to this, from which men only began to emerge at the outset of civilization, and which is still realized among barbarous and demi-barbarous nations. We advert to the sordid condition of those, whom nought but the agonies of hunger can impel to shake off an indolence that is else unconquerable; and who, as soon as they have satisfied its cravings, lapse again into the rooted and habitual lethargy of their nature. If they have but enough of sleep, and enough of surfeiting, they care for no higher gratification—nor will they make one effort, above that level to which they subside, by the weight of their own constitutional sluggishness. Food of some description or other they must have,—but having it, they are pleased to live in filth and nakedness, and nearly in utter want of all the secondary accommodations. It is obvious, of such a people, that so long as they abide in this habit, the inferior soils of the earth will never be reached by them. It is even possible that they may stop short at the very first and most fertile of the land; and never taste of that abundance, which is within their reach, just because of their insuperable aversion to the labour of extracting it. It is thus that they might doze away their existence, on the surface of an earth, whose dormant capabilities they never enter upon—and in vast territories, capable of sustaining millions over and above the few stragglers by whom they are occupied, both cultivation and population may, just because of this moral barrier, have been fixed and limited for many centuries."

Never was the interval, from the one of these extremes to the other, more rapidly described by the people of any country than by those of Scot-

* Pp. 23 and 24.

land. Traces of the earlier habit are still discernible, in the more remote and outlandish parts of our territory. But, in all the more populous and modernized districts, the people are descending in multitudes to the latter habit—now established in our cotton mills, and extensively prevalent both among the weavers in our towns, and the day-labourers in our country parishes. The testimonies of the reviewer apply to a period when our workmen, by an increasing, but not yet excessive labour, earned their new and rapidly increasing enjoyments. The competition of their growing number, has now somewhat stinted their enjoyments; and, at all events, is aggravating their labour into a cruel and oppressive bondage. Never will they reach the proper dignity of man, till they have reached the condition, not of higher wages only, but of higher wages and less work; an eminence fully accessible we think, but only by dint of prudence and principle among themselves—lessons which never will be diffused and obtain a practical establishment throughout the land, save on the vehicle of the people's Christianity, and in conjunction with the lessons of the gospel.

When a writer maintains an untenable position, we generally meet, in the style of exaggeration which he employs, with specially emphatic clauses. The reviewer tells us, "that, instead of being stationary or retrograde, the condition of all classes, but *particularly of the labourers*, has been vastly improved since the American war, and *especially during the present century*."* Now, it so hap-

* Page 57 of the Review.

pens, that in both the clauses where he has laid the stress of particularity on the one, and of speciality on the other, the emphasis is misplaced. If, by labourers, be meant those to whom the designation purely and properly belongs, who receive wages simply in return for the exertion of their strength, and not because of the power they have of bringing to a dead stand, or state of unproductiveness, the enormous capital of their employers; it will be found, under our exposure of the reviewer's first great error, that their wages lie at the bottom of the scale. And, again, under our exposure of his second great error, it will be found that a general re-action, in the condition of the working classes, took place about twenty years ago; and that, precisely during the present century, their progress was first arrested, and then turned backwards. He has been unfortunate both in regard to the class of men, and to the period of years, on which he meant to lay the pith of his argument. He made a twofold selection, for the obvious purpose of enhancing his statement, or the proof by which he was supporting it; and in both he is wrong. We have sometimes to correct a reader for laying the emphasis on wrong words. The reviewer has laid his emphasis on wrong things.

But the mistake into which the reviewer has fallen is a common one in all philosophy. It is the mistake of those who would collect the permanent and immutable laws of nature, from the study, not of her wonted courses, but of her transition or temporary processes, which come speedily to a termina-

tion. When justice, and order, and law were for the first time securely established throughout Scotland, at the middle of the last century—in the then imperfect state of its cultivation, and with such a vast amount of unimproved, and yet highly improvable territory before it, it was sure to make rapid, but not on that account, indefinite and interminable progress. While the process of enlargement was going on, the opening and augmenting resources of the country, kept so far ahead of the population, as to admit both a free increase of their numbers, and a general elevation in the style of their enjoyments. And so the reviewer, looking back to this sudden and mighty acceleration, can see nothing in the fixed necessities of the constitution under which we are placed, in the very limits of the territory upon which we stand, and still more in the eternal barriers of its last possible agriculture, to prevent the same history from being acted over and over again, or from lasting for ever. Yet he does seem to labour under the sensation of certain impediments, actually felt at this moment, and which stand in the way of that elastic and illimitable progress that a right political economy is infallibly to secure for us. A cause for these impediments must be assigned; and he finds it in the abuses of the poor-laws. Let these only be modified, and in despite of all the tendencies of population, in despite of the undoubted and demonstrable excess which the power of the species to increase has over the power of the soil to multiply its products, in despite of the irreversible laws of Nature—the reviewer, unmindful

of these, but seeks for an amendment and a new administration of the laws of England, after which there will be nothing, positively "nothing to counteract the onward progress of the country."*

In the investigations of physical science, a theory on any given subject is not dismissed, but still held to be valuable, even though it should not perfectly account for all the facts which are connected with it. It is the practice of all the soundest and most successful disciples in this branch of inquiry, still to keep their hold upon the theory; and, viewing the anomalous, or yet unexplained facts in the light of what they term 'residual phenomena,'† they seek after the modifying circumstances which might account for the existence of them; and often have the satisfaction of discovering, not only that they are perfectly consistent with the theory against which they seemed to rebel, but afforded a decisive corroboration to it. It is even so with the theory of population, which recognises an impassable limit to the numbers of the human race, and a degradation of comfort, if that limit be too hardly pressed upon. But this prevents not, in particular cases, both rapid enlargements in the population of a country, and along with this as rapid an elevation in the style of their enjoyments. Yet, on investigating the special or the modifying causes, we are sure to find, that, so far from confounding the theory of population, they but serve to confirm it To admit, as we have done throughout, the suc-

* Page 62 of the Review.

† See Sir John Herschell's admirable discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy.

cessive enlargements, which one improvement after another, whether in the agriculture and the arts of a nation, or in the political economy of its government, will surely give rise to; and yet, to retain the Malthusian doctrine of population, is to proceed, we apprehend, as sound philosophers do, with a general theory and its residual, but in this instance, its now incorporated and harmonized phenomena. But our reviewer has abjured the theory of population—reposing though it does on the palpable inductions of history, and the plainest results of calculation, or on the real and essential phenomena of the question; and he has given us in place, a universal theory, founded on the residual phenomena alone.

But the most decisive way of bringing this whole controversy to the test, would be to institute an actual computation respecting one of these hoped-for enlargements; and, for the sake of full justice to the reviewer, we will give up to him his own numbers, or those used by himself, in estimating the effect of that one enlargement which, by the common consent of economists, is the most important of them all. We mean, the abolition of the corn laws—a measure which the reviewer would lead us to believe, will keep us all right for at least about half-a-century to come; or rather, will be the mean of letting in upon us a stream of prosperity, enough for the peace and plenty of our nation to the most distant ages. We think his imagination a sanguine one, when he counts, as the effect of this repeal, on the importation of as much food as shall be equivalent to the sustenance

of four millions of people.* But let even this be conceded; and, judging of the future from the past, let us endeavour, on the data which the reviewer himself hath prescribed to us, to guess at the result of it. The population of Britain in 1801, was 10,942,646; the population in 1831, was 16,537,398—making an increase in thirty years of more than five millions and a half. But it were fairer to compare the last census with that of 1811, when the population was 12,609,864; for though it exhibits the increase for the last twenty years to be somewhat less than four millions—yet, if the proportional increase for the next twenty years be the same with what has actually taken place since 1811, we should, by 1851, have the addition of considerably more than four millions. In other words, with a rate of increase in our population the same as from 1811, we shall, in less than twenty years, overtake the whole quantity of imported food which the most ardent of our speculators have yet counted on. But we presume that they do not calculate on an instant enlargement to all this extent of supplies from abroad; or that food for four millions will be landed on our shores, the very first year after the repeal of our corn laws. If we ever reach so large a maximum of importation as this, we shall reach it gradually; and, supposing this to be the case, the yearly increase of our population may just keep pace with the yearly increase of our food, through the twenty years to come, as through the twenty years that are already past. It matters not to the comfort

* See page 70 of the Review.

of our population, if the additional corn do come to our markets, from what quarter it comes—whether, as hitherto, from the enlargement of our own agriculture; or, as henceforth, from the agriculture of other lands now thrown open to us. For the next twenty years then, even admitting the largest anticipations that have yet been conceived from the repeal of our corn laws, we have no reason to expect a better economic state for the people, than they enjoyed during the twenty years that have just gone by,—a period of various and chequered fortune, but certainly marked by any other character than that of secure and progressive prosperity,—a period, not of great popular discontent only, but often of great and general distress; and when, notwithstanding the actual enlargement which has taken place in the means of subsistence, the urgently felt need of a further enlargement formed the most powerful of all those moving forces, that led to the greatest movement which ever took place, without a revolution, in the history of public affairs. The addition made to our food during the last twenty years, is equal to the addition which the most sanguine of our calculators do anticipate for the next twenty years, from the repeal of the corn laws. And yet certainly, the prevalent sensation, throughout the whole of the bygone period, among the manufacturing classes, has been that of straitness and insufficiency. We cannot therefore sympathize in the exultation of the reviewer, as he looks forward to the next half century of unshackled commerce, and, to the food of four millions of human beings,

as the fruit of our unrestrained access to all the granaries in the world. We would regulate our hopes of the experiment, by our recollections of the experience; and these utterly forbid a brighter prospect of the future, than is our recollection of the past. And it does shake our confidence in the various resources and expedients of political economy—when thus taught, by the plainest arithmetic, that this most promising of all its measures, this most effective of all its strokes, the repeal of the corn laws, is to do so little for us. Without some higher and more effective operation still, we have too vivid a remembrance of the complaints, and the outcries, and the actual sufferings of our rapidly increasing population, during the rapidly increasing subsistence of the years that have elapsed —to calculate with any degree of assurance, either on the blessings of internal peace, or the comforts of increased abundance for the coming generation.

There is another of the reviewer's estimates which leads to the same conclusion. He tells us, that the produce of Scotland, during the brilliant period of its advancement for the last sixty years, has increased six-fold.* But all that he expects from the repeal of the corn laws, and a very large expectation it is, is food for four millions, or food for less than a fourth part of our existing population; less, therefore, than a fourth part of the food actually consumed at present within the limits of the British territory. It follows not, that though a six-fold augmentation of the means of

* See Review. page 60.

subsistence should permit that free movement of advance which Scotland has doubtless undergone, that Britain will experience any thing like it; or that the comforts and circumstances of its people will be sensibly raised by an augmentation, which, taken relatively, is less than a twenty-fourth part of that which has been assigned for our own portion of the empire. In the one case the population may have passed into a state of wider and larger sufficiency than before; a process exemplified in Scotland, not after, however, but rather till the commencement of the present century; and which certainly terminated more than twenty years ago. In the other case, the advancing population may hang on the rear of the advancing food; nay, press upon it, as they have actually done during the last twenty years; and that, notwithstanding an increase in the means of subsistence, equal to all which is promised us from a repeal of the corn laws. In other words, we have no warrant, either from calculation or experience, to anticipate a brighter era than that which has just passed over us; with this only difference, that all its dissatisfactions and discomforts will be aggravated by the disappointment of those fallacious hopes into which the people have been betrayed.

Yet, as the reviewer knows, we advocate the repeal of the corn laws; though not so much for the sake of its material benefits, as of its moral effect, in the removal of those heart-burnings and hostile jealousies, which threaten to tear asunder the component parts of British Society. Respect-

ing the economic measure, we are practically at one; and what the remaining quarrel or controversy is, on this part of the subject, we are at a loss to comprehend. Is it that we would commence too early, our proposed operation on the hearts and habits of the people? Is it yet soon enough, or over-soon, to adopt a vigorous educational system, whose influence might thoroughly pervade the whole of that plebeian mass which is now congregated in cities; and even through the country at large, has outgrown all the instituted means, whether of common or Christian instruction? Are we too precipitate in recommending the instant multiplication of schools and parishes in towns; or too earnest in imploring the dispensers of patronage, to act forthwith on the sacred responsibility of their trusts, and recollect that, in their hands are placed the dearest and the highest interests of families? Must all attempts to moralize, and truly to enlighten the commonalty of our nation, be kept in abeyance till political economy has run the whole course of its expedients; or, what were infinitely worse, till the politics and the mock patriotism of our day, have practised, even to exhaustion, the cajolery of their lying promises on a cruelly deceived population?

It is an observation of the sagacious Talleyrand, that a mob is never formidable, if we speak to their reason, and treat them with frankness and honesty. More hateful and a thousand times more pernicious to the commonwealth, than even the sycophants of the court, are the sycophants of

the people—those blind leaders of the blind, who by turning the attention and desire of the working classes to the wrong quarter, for that enlargement which awaits them, do but perpetuate their bondage, and sink them deeper into want and helplessness than before. They only are their true friends, who tell them, with undaunted fidelity, wherein it is that their great strength, and also wherein it is, that their great weakness lies. Let them be reckless, and dissolute; and, uncaring of all consequences, bent only, and that to the last farthing of their present means, on the revelry of their present enjoyments—then there is no one expedient, within the whole compass of politics or political economy, which can save them from degradation. On the other hand, let each be wise and wary for himself. Let those who can afford to squander, now begin to accumulate. On the question of marriage, we bid them take their lesson, not at the school of Malthus, but at the school of common sense, and of their own individual discretion. We are quite willing, that they shall be eternally kept without reach of his economic theory on population, if they can also be kept without reach of the senseless cry which has been raised in opposition to it. It is enough for any object of ours, if the step of their entrance upon a family, shall be practically regarded as one wherewith prudence and principle have to do—instead of being regarded as the only occasion of life in which recklessness is a virtue, and a defiance to all consequences, is faith in the providence of God. We do not care for their being tutored by the economists, could

they only be rescued from the wretched misguidance of the sentimentalists and bigots upon this question. We do not want either the one party of these speculators, or the other, to decide thi question for the people—but we want the people to have such a knowledge, and such a taste, and such a morality given to them, as that they should be enabled to decide the matter wisely and respectably for themselves. When once this is done, they will stand upon sure vantage-ground. In virtue of their accumulated funds, and no longer in the prostrate condition of men who are from hand to mouth, they will be raised above the necessity of working for their immediate subsistence. In virtue of their restrained and regulated families, the means of subsistence will be more liberally shared amongst them. It is only when the market ceases to be overstocked with human labour, that labourers have the dictation of their own terms—or, can at least treat independently with their employers. This is the very place of eminence and security, in which we should rejoice to behold them; and rejoice the more, because of that pathway of intelligence and virtue by which they must have won their way to it. The arts and inventions of machinery have enlarged, and will continue to enlarge, indefinitely, the production of wealth; but it is by a mental and moral regimen alone, that we shall secure the right distribution of it. We know of no other practical solution for this great problem; and therefore it is, that we have ventured to assert the impotency of every expedient besides. This, in truth, seems to have been

the main substance and amount of our offending. What all economists admit to be of some importance, we pronounce to be of supreme importance: That moral worth, which they regard as but helpful, we regard as indispensable, to the economic well-being of the people.

While we would leave the elevated parts of our social fabric untouched, all our fondest wishes are on the side of the common people. It is our belief, that through the medium, not of a political change in the state, but of a moral and personal change upon themselves, there is not one desirable amelioration which they might not mount their way to. The combination laws, those engines of a systematic injustice against the rights of far the most important order in the community, are now done away; and it only remains, that by the tacit, yet effectual combination of their own virtue, and economy, and prudence, they shall take that path of onward and indefinite advancement which now lies before them. The condition to which they might hopefully aspire—and it is the part of every honest and enlightened philanthropist to help them forward to it—is that of less work and higher wages; and this, not only that they might participate more largely in the physical enjoyments of life, but that, in exemption from oppressive toil, and with the command of dignified leisure, there might be full opportunity and scope for the development of their nobler faculties, in the prosecution of all the higher objects of a rational and immortal existence. There is but one practicable opening, we hold, to such an enlargement for the

working classes, and which can only be made good by the strength of their own moral determination —when, after the spectacle of cheerful and well-paid industry has been fully realized, we shall at length behold them emancipated from their sore bondage, and these brethren of our common nature transformed into lettered, and humanized, and companionable men.

The days were when the Edinburgh Review would have participated more cordially in all these sentiments—not only in regard to the omnipotence of moral causes for the elevation of the working classes, but, separately from these, in regard to the utter hopelessness of permanent good to them from any other quarter.*

We are abundantly sensible to the charge of Utopianism, which has been preferred against our anticipations. It is impossible to be otherwise; for we have heard it a thousand times over; and with all the greater emphasis now—that we have endeavoured to demonstrate the Utopianism of every other anticipation or expedient for the permanent amelioration of our species. There would be Utopianism in the expectation, that, by the utterance of a word, as if, by the lifting of a magical wand, the population of our empire were to be suddenly moralized. But there is no such Utopianism in looking for a similar result, on the families of a manageable section, whether in town or country, from the protracted assiduities of a Chris-

* In proof of this, we refer to the articles which the Editor was pleased to admit from ourselves, and which are republished in this Volume.

tian philanthropist, appointed to live and to labour in the midst of them. The achievement wears a visionary and impracticable aspect—only because ontemplated in its totality; and without regard, either to its component parts, or to the distinct and separate steps which lead to this grand consummation. But any national or universal result which we look for, will be made out by a summation of particulars; and if those particulars do severally lie within the compass of human instrumentality, this should be enough to redeem our hopes from the charge of extravagance or unlikelihood. For when we speak of the power of education, it is of education multiplied into ten thousand distinct and particular efforts, pervading every city mass, made to overspread the whole extent, and to penetrate into every corner, of the land. The effect is gigantic; but without one giant having to do in the execution of it—for it will be brought about, not by the transcendent powers of one or a few individuals, but by the numbers of ordinary men. The work to be done is great, and will need a proportional machinery for the doing of it —a thick-set establishment of schools and parishes, the indispensable condition of whose efficiency is, that they shall be righteously patronised. The result will at length be arrived at, not by the working of one mighty organization for the achievement of great things; but by the accumulation of small things,—not by men whose taste it is to contemplate what is splendid in philanthropy; but by men whose practical talent it is, to do what is substantial in philanthropy,—not by men who eye, with

imaginative transport, the broad and boundless expanse of humanity; but by men, who can work in drudgery and in detail, at the separate portions of it. The glory of establishing in our world that universal reign of truth and of righteousness which is coming, will not be the glory of any one man; but it will be the glory of Him who sitteth above, and plieth his many millions of instruments for bringing about this magnificent result. It is enough for each of us to be one of these instruments, to contribute his little item to the cause, and look for the sum total as the product of innumerable contributions, each of them as meritorious, and many of them, perhaps, far more splendid and important than his own.

To change the habit of a nation, must ever seem a Utopian enterprise, so long as we measure the achievement by our own individual strength. But this is not the work of one man, but of many thousand men; and it is not Utopianism, but experience, to affirm the possibility that each of those men shall, in his own territorial vineyard, and among the people of his peculiar charge, realize the union which obtains between the Christianity of a state, and those blessings of a civil or temporal nature which follow in its train. Their first concern is with the religion, the righteousness of the people; but we are not to overlook the declaration, that when he who seeketh this first also findeth it, all other things shall be added unto him. There is a most important connexion between the Christianity and the sound economic condition of our families; and while the lessons of political

science, as they fall from the lips of philosophers, however just in principle, are wholly impotent in practice—we have long thought, that they are the clergymen of a land, who hold those mainsprings, by a right impulse on which, they might speed forward, and at length achieve, all those objects, which are dearest to the heart, either of the philanthropist or of the patriot. More especially do we regard them as in occupation of the best vantage-ground, for combating all the difficulties which are felt or imagined in the problem of pauperism; and that it lies with them, without departing by a single hair-breadth from the sacredness of their profession, to avert from our borders this sore, this withering blight on the virtues of the Scottish population. Believing, as we do, of that moral pestilence, that, in the deadly virus wherewith it is charged, there exist all the elements of misery and corruption—we cannot deem the question of parish economics unworthy of a place among the other cares and studies of a clergyman. Political economy is not theology; but political economy, as associated with the moral state and moral prospects of society, is that upon which even theology might deign to cast an eye. This science, celestial though it be, possesses a mighty ascendant over all terrestrial interests and affairs. Heaven is the ultimate landing-place of its contemplations—yet the history of earth has either been directed by its power, or deeply leavened by its presence. With its corruption stood palpably associated the darkness and despotism of the middle ages—and it is no less palpable, whe-

ther we look to the wider theatre of Europe, or to the struggles of piety and patriotism in our own land, that its Reformation was the harbinger of all the light and the liberty of our modern day. Now, let us hope there is reserved for it a more pacific, yet more glorious triumph—not on the arena of a stormy politics, but by its silent operation on the growth of popular intelligence and virtue throughout our parishes; thus providing the surest remedy for all the moral and political disorders to which a country is exposed; and, while its main object is the preparation of human beings for eternity, scattering a thousand beatitudes along the way that leads to it; and, in the formation of a well-principled and well-constituted peasantry, rendering the best of services to the commonwealth.

POSTSCRIPT.

In our Pamphlet, entitled, "On the Supreme Importance of a Right Moral to a Right Economical State of the Community," we have endeavoured to rectify the misconceptions in a recent article of the Edinburgh Review, relative both to the standard of enjoyment, and to the great actual improvement which is there affirmed to have taken place in the habits and condition of the people. We shall therefore not recur to these topics now, but proceed immediately to the consideration of certain other objections, which the reviewer has brought forward against a few of the special doctrines of our work. We flatter ourselves, that a very brief rejoinder on our part, more especially if accompanied by a careful re-perusal of the denounced passages on the part of the reader, will prove enough to satisfy him of the futility of these objections.

I. The first of the reviewer's impeachments which we feel ourselves called upon to notice, is that which he prefers against our views on the restorative power of capital—in virtue of which, if

impaired by extravagance or certain other causes, it, by an instant operation on prices, recovers, almost *per saltum*, the whole of the loss or diminution which it had sustained. Had he noticed our admission, as to the effect of a universal mania on the side of expenditure,* it might have prevented his attempt to destroy our principle by a *reductio ad absurdum*. The truth is, that the case which he supposes, of an extreme and unlimited expenditure, and of its undoubted effect in sweeping off all capital from the land, so far from subverting the analogy between the two elements of capital and population, tends to complete and to confirm it. A universal celibacy, or exterminating epidemic, would depopulate the land; and yet it remains an undoubted principle, that, notwithstanding the actual ravages of disease and war, the deficiency of numbers is speedily repaired, and the population is upheld from year to year, in a state commensurate to the means of their subsistence. A universal consumption and refusal to accumulate, would effect the utter extinction of capital within our borders, yet capital possesses all the elastic force which we have ascribed to it—in virtue of which, not by a process of economy on the part of remaining capitalists, but at the expense of purchasers, and by the operation of high prices, the capital, if it sustain diminution one year, is rebuilt the next, up to its original magnitude; and so is upholden in a state commensurate to the means of its profitable investiture.

But the reviewer attempts a positive, as well as

* See Chap. IV. Sect. 6 and 7 of the Work.

a negative or indirect refutation. He first conceives the price of the article to have been made so much higher, by the limitation of the capital employed in the preparation of it—that we are led to seek it from other lands, and thus enrich foreigners at the expense of our own country. Let us shortly trace the effect of this operation. In so far as we have to pay for this new import, by the exportation of agricultural produce, in as far do we alienate a certain portion of the people's maintenance from our shores. In so far, which would be the case in Britain, as we would pay for it in export manufactures—in as far do we extend one department of British industry, and in the degree precisely equal to the contraction that has been suffered by another. The capital which disappeared from one branch of our national industry, re-appears in other branches. The same ability of purchasers which would have replaced the capital of the one, had it stood, adds an equal capital to the others which are extended. The addition made to our imports first tells, as is indicated by its effect on the rate of exchange, in raising the profits of our export trade, and then terminates in a corresponding addition to our exports.

But what the reviewer deems his most conclusive argument against our doctrine is, not that the article may become so dear through the diminished capital, as that customers shall be led to seek it from abroad; but, that the article may become so dear as that customers shall be led not to seek after it at all. Now we do not need to be told, that the price of an article may be so far increased,

as to diminish the consumption in a greater ratio —so that, on the whole, less money shall be spent on that article than before. It is true, that we advanced the supposition of the same pecuniary expenditure having been made upon glass after it had become dearer—not however because the truth of our principle depended on the supposition, but because the supposition might be of use in illustrating the principle. The re-appearance of the same capital at the end of the year, does not depend upon an equal sum being spent on the identical article now made dearer. It depends on an equal sum being spent. Though customers had reduced to any extent their purchase of glass, or had abandoned it altogether—that annual portion of their wealth which wont to be spent on glass, would either be spent on other articles, or would remain with themselves. If the former, then, by this shift in the expenditure, there might be as much of additional capital upheld in other branches of industry as has been lost to glass-making. If the latter, and the wealth thus remaining with customers be not hoarded, but deposited in banks, it will thence be advanced in loans, either to men who spend it, and in the act of spending will create or augment capitals in other employments, to the extent of the whole sum that wont to be vested in glass-making ; or to men who employ it in business themselves, and so will cause it to assume the form of an operative capital in their own hands.

We may here notice an objection against our principle, which the reviewer has not specified—

even that our reasonings, although they should be held conclusive in regard to circulating, do not apply to fixed capital. Our illustrations certainly are taken more from the case of circulating, than of fixed capital; but the reasoning is equally solid or equally fallacious with both. Neither the fixed nor the circulating capital can be extended beyond the limits of that returning power, by which they are replaced with a profit; and either, though largely encroached upon, so as to be reduced beneath that limit, will, by the action on prices and their consequent increase, speedily recover itself —the circulating in one, the fixed in several revolutions of the economic cycle. They are the consequent higher prices which repair the loss that the capital of the country sustains from the extravagance of individual merchants; they were the enormous war prices which sustained the capital under the vast yearly absorptions of the government loans.

There is nothing in our principle to affect the maxim brought forward by the reviewer, that "the hand of the diligent maketh rich;" neither is there ought in this maxim to affect the truth of our principle. The spendthrift ruins himself irrecoverably; and though the capital which he has wasted almost instantly re-appears, it does not spring up again in his hands, but in the hands of those brother capitalists, who have acted with greater wisdom than himself. And this new capital, which appears in place of the old that has been dissipated, is not a magical creation out of nothing, but is built up out of the privations for

the year, of those who have to encounter the higher prices of an under-supplied market. These higher prices do, of themselves, explain the resuscitation of the capital; and to superadd the painstaking economy of the remaining capitalists, is to call in the operation of a doubly greater energy than the effect to be accounted for requires.

There are laws of political economy, as stable and irreversible as are the laws of nature. And, notwithstanding the pleasantries of one reviewer, it still holds true, that if the capital of a country be a hundred millions, and its profit ten per cent. so as to yield the return of a hundred and ten millions to the holders of it—then, let this capital be reduced, by the extravagance of some of its possessors, to ninety-nine millions; and, should no other change have taken place in the circumstances of the people, the next return will still be a hundred and ten millions as before, or the profit for the year will be elevated to upwards of eleven per cent. The capitalists would, in the aggregate, earn a larger revenue one year; and that precisely because of their larger expenditure on the year which preceded it. And yet, in perfect consistency with this, those capitalists who spend most beyond the eleven per cent. would decline the most in individual wealth; and those capitalists who saved most within the eleven per cent. would advance the most in individual wealth. The reviewer hath neglected this distinction; and managed, in consequence, to conjure up one of those specious plausibilities, which strike the senses of the multitude, and serve the purpose of casting a temporary

obscuration on sound principle. He hath forgotten that political economy deals in aggregates; and, whether the oversight be unintelligent or wilful, it is alike unworthy of science.

The Author of our nature hath so wisely adapted the constitution of man to the interests of human society, that the moral forces on the side of expenditure and accumulation balance each other. If the tendency be to spend too much, the effect on prices and profits is such, as to hold forth a sufficient lure to the lovers of gain; and, if the tendency be to accumulate too much, the effect in lowering prices and profits is such, that further accumulation may cease to be an object; and the general cheapness becomes in its turn a lure to the lovers of enjoyment. The opposite tendencies meet, and counteract each other. Individual capital may often shift hands; but, in the midst of all these oscillations, the general capital of the nation is ever tending, and is never far from it, to the state that is best suited to the actual circumstances of the period. Capital, in short, is a self-regulating interest; and as little requires the helping hand of statesmen, as does the element of population.

The Edinburgh Reviewer mistakes the relation in which machinery and capital stand to each other; or the precise effect which the improvement of the former has on the magnitude of the latter. Should the time ever arrive, when agriculture shall have reached its last possible limit, and art shall have arisen to its greatest possible perfection, capital would still recover itself up to

that certain mean state from which it had fallen by some depressing fluctuation; and that, in virtue alone of a quick and sudden reaction on prices, and the consequently higher profits. The proper office of machinery is not to restore capital, but to extend it. When the work of human hands is made more effective than before, by the intervention of tools or instruments of any sort, this operates to the extension of agriculture, and so to the extension of population, or the amount of immediate labour which the country, with its increased produce, can now subsist; and so also to the extension of capital, or the amount of accumulated labour which the country, with its increased business, can now remunerate. This is the real process which takes place spontaneously, and at will, with every onward step, by which art is improved and agriculture extended; so as to make it an equally needless and misplaced anxiety, whether the apprehension be, lest the country should not be adequately supplied with the living, or not be adequately supplied with the dead instruments of labour.

II. The next of the reviewer's charges which we shall notice, is, that we do not annex a sufficient value either to manufactures or to foreign trade. We value both up to the full extent of all which they do for us. And the principle on which we found our estimate seems a very obvious one, and to carry its own evidence along with it; having, in fact, the very character and instant force upon our convictions, which belongs to any axiom or truism. The principle is this—that the

importance or worth of any manufacture is to be regarded as neither more nor less, than the worth or importance of its products; the worth or importance of any branch of foreign trade, is neither more nor less, than the worth or importance of the articles which it brings to our shores. All, for example, which a hatter contributes to society, is hats—this is his service; it is not greater than this, it is not less than this. Whatever benefit can be demonstrated of hats, that benefit, in full, is rendered to the public by hat-makers. In like manner, all we owe to the stocking manufacture, is stockings; to the wine trade, is wine; and so to other manufactures or other trades, we owe cloth, or cutlery, or glass, or porcelain, or tea, or sugar, or oranges, or nitre, and a thousand other commodities exceedingly various both in kind and in the degrees of their importance; but such an importance as represents, or rather constitutes, the whole importance of the respective processes of industry, by which they, one and all of them, are prepared for human use and human enjoyment.

It is strange, that the utterance of so mere a truism should ever have been called for; or that any errors and illusions should have arisen in the science of political economy, in the face of a principle having such extreme obviousness and simplicity as this. But so it is; and the idea of something more than its own products being originated by a trade or manufacture, pervades the whole business of charity, and law, and politics. In devising for the relief of poverty, the conception both of parish vestries and parliaments, seems

undoubtedly to have been, that the providing of indefinite employment was tantamount to the providing of indefinite maintenance for the people—as if the making of highways, or the preparation of straw bonnets, provided something more than the road or the bonnet; but, over and above this, had some sort of effect in the production of bread. The same conception enters into the alarm, or rather gives birth to it, which is felt on the prospect or the risk of any manufacture being destroyed, or branch of foreign trade being put an end to. The effect would be, that we might lose shawls, or tea, or spiceries, or other articles of more and less utility; and be obliged to reserve the wealth which wont formerly to be expended on these, for the purchase of something else. But the apprehension is, that, over and above the loss of these products, we should lose the very subsistence of the thousands who are engaged in the preparation of them; beside so much of all the other interests, comprised in, or suggested by, the very names of wealth, and power, and national revenue—as if these lay in the things that were consumed, and not in the ability of the consumers; in the products of the various manufactures and trades, and not in the price which was paid by them.

Never was a reviewer more wide of the mark, than our antagonist is at present, in attempting to displace or to nullify this principle. He undertakes the refutation of one doctrine, by the affirmation of another doctrine, wherewith it has no earthly connexion. We affirm, that the only benefit which a manufacture renders to society is

its own products. And to meet this, for the purpose too of overturning it, he tells of the mighty benefit which has been rendered to society by the division of labour. Verily there is nothing in the one affirmation which cometh into contact, far less into conflict with the other. It is greatly better, that, instead of the same man making both hats and stockings, one man should be employed in making hats only, and another man in making stockings only. In this way a double, or treble, or perhaps larger multiple than either of these, both of hats and stockings, is served up for the benefit of the community. Still the hat-maker gives hats only, though more hats—the stocking-maker gives stockings only, though more stockings. We shall willingly, however, estimate the thing at as much as it is worth. Two hats are better than one, two pairs of stockings are better than one; and this is the strict and proper benefit which society receives from the division of labour. Human enjoyments are greatly multiplied by this arrangement; and we have furthermore endeavoured to show, how it speeds onward the extension of the agriculture to inferior soils—so that human subsistence is greatly increased by it. Nevertheless, it holds true of each special manufacture, that it emanates nothing but its own appropriate and special products; and no mere multiplying process can transmute the products of one manufacture into those of another, or into any thing else. The multiplication of chairs will never produce tables, nor the multiplication of tables produce chairs. And the same reasoning holds

true of foreign trade, by which our enjoyments have been greatly varied; and, through the wider scope given by it to the division of employment, our enjoyments have been greatly multiplied. We have endeavoured to estimate, and do estimate very highly the importance of foreign trade. Still, the principle for which we contend survives all these admissions—that the wine trade yields nothing else to the nation than wine, and the orange trade than oranges, and the sugar trade than sugar, and lastly, the corn trade than corn. These various articles are all useful in their respective ways; and the last of them the most useful of any. For their sake we have advocated a free general trade; but, for reasons peculiar to itself, have we advocated most strenuously of all, a free corn trade.

But, lastly, a qualification on this principle has been made by ourselves, but is insisted on by others greatly beyond all legitimate boundaries—that trade and manufactures do contribute something more than their own peculiar commodities; for it is the presentation of these commodities which arouses the sleeping energies of the husbandman, and so stimulates the agriculture, as to have enriched the nation with an incalculably greater quantity of food. This is an intelligible assertion, and altogether free of mysticism. Nevertheless, we should be grievously misled by it, if we gave in to the delusion, that what trade and manufactures did for us in an incipient, it can still do in an advanced or extreme state of the agriculture. The truth is, now that the change is fully established of taste and habit on the part of the

landlords, which begun at the termination of the middle, and commencement of the modern ages—no possible fluctuations or failures, either in trade or manufactures, can recall the agriculture from that limit, at which the land last entered on yields a produce, that will feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries, beside some further excess over and above this, for a profit to the farmer. Neither does it follow from this, that we plead for the abolition of trade and manufactures—or that, if ever the sentence of annihilation were passed and executed upon them, the agriculture of the country would proceed notwithstanding. It is enough, both for the integrity and the importance of our principle, that no possible change in trade and manufactures, whether induced by an adverse politics abroad, or by a fluctuation in the taste of customers, and the direction of the expenditure at home—can leave the landlords without a sufficiency of objects on which to spend their income, or can practically extinguish within them the ambition and desire of making these incomes as large as possible. This will ever secure for us such an agriculture, as shall be competent to the maintenance of the greatest desirable population; while the only permanent effect of any actual revolution in trade or manufactures, will be the loss, or rather the change of enjoyment to the landlords; and to the people a change in the direction of their industry. Had this principle been acted on, it might have saved us many a disastrous war; and, worst of all disasters, that of a neglected and uneducated population. Our government would

never go to war for the sake of India snawls; but when the images of security, and subsistence, and power, and national grandeur, come to be delusively blended with the operations of merchandise —it will, and has gone to war for the sake of the India trade. Government would never have spared the adequate taxation for a thorough scholarship, whether in the moral or literary sense of the term, of all the people in the land—had it seen the real state of the alternative to be, a thorough education for all the orders of the community, and a somewhat abridged luxury for the higher orders. But it does shrink from the adequate taxation—when it looks on the terms of the alternative, as a thorough education of the people and an abridged commerce, or an abridgment, therefore, of all those interests, wherewith commerce has been so fancifully associated. It is thus that the highest objects of patriotism are involved in the truth of a principle, which, if admitted and acted upon, might have saved us all the wars of commercial jealousy, and all the distempers both moral and political, of an uninstructed population.

III. The last objection of the reviewer which we shall notice, is the one taken by him to our view of the incidence of taxes—although he has only confined himself to a mere statement of the objection, without noticing any of the calculations, or the reasons by which our doctrine is supported.

In the first place, it is not enough to dispose of it by saying, that it is but a revival of the old doctrine of the French economists. The doctrine is

the same; but we arrive at it by altogether different steps. The reasonings are not the same. We expressly disclaim the most essential principles which enter into the composition of their argument; and rest the doctrine in question, on considerations which did not occur, and which, in the state of the science at the time, could not have occurred to any of the economists of that period.

Neither is it enough to tell us, that the rental of Britain is short of the public revenue of Britain—a statement advanced by the Edinburgh reviewer, for the purpose of fastening an axiomatic absurdity on our argument; and advanced too by his more ironical brother, the Quarterly, as forming a small difficulty in our way. The acre of carrot seed, mentioned in our work, which bore a produce worth £80, after paying the tithe of £8 to the clergyman, could only afford a rent of £1 to the proprietor. And yet nothing can be more true, than that the tithe is a deduction from the rent, and therefore paid by the landlord—not a deduction from the £1 actually received by him, after the tithe was paid; but a deduction from the £9 that would have been paid to him had there been no tithe. We have not affirmed that the part is greater than the whole; but that the part may be greater than the remainder, after that part has been deducted from the whole. Our reviewers have confounded one element with another. They have treated the remainder, as if it had been the whole; or, in the language of our older arithmetical books, they have charged us with making the subtrahend greater than the minuend, when we

have only made it greater than the difference between them.

The remission of the existing taxes would enrich the landlords in two ways. In the first place, by the removal of a burden from farmers and their servants, and cheapening all the other expenses of farm husbandry, it would to that extent raise their rents. In the second place, by removing the burden from all other capitalists and labourers, and also by detaching from all taxed commodities an ingredient which now enters directly into their price, it would to that extent cheapen the various articles of family expenditure, which is tantamount to an increase of revenue. After this, although the whole of our present national revenue, were drawn by a personal levy from their landlords and their mortgagees jointly, including among the last, the holders of that great national mortgage the public debt—we think it could be arithmetically shown, that this would be laying no greater burden on the proprietors of the soil, than now lies upon them, in the shape both of higher prices and of lower rents, than would obtain under the new system of taxation.

This is quite enough, as an answer to both of these reviews—for, in truth, neither of them has entered argumentatively into the subject. But, since we went to press, we have seen the British Critic for October, whose perfect concurrence with us in the main lessons of our work, could not fail, amid the general lack of English sympathy, to be exceedingly agreeable. We have now some prospect of being understood, more especially on

the subject of capital; with the help in particular of the very important remark made by this reviewer on our doctrine—which, though it has at times been present to our thoughts, we have not brought out in the volume. It is the general interest of labourers, that there should be a moderate population—in virtue of the connexion between a moderate population and higher wages. And in this matter, there is the fullest harmony between the general and the individual interest, for it is to the obvious and direct advantage of each labourer, that he should not marry till in sufficient circumstances for the maintenance of a family. In like manner, it is for the general interest of capitalists, that capital should be moderate rather than excessive—in virtue of the connexion which obtains between a moderate capital, and higher profits. But in this matter, there is not the same harmony between the individual and the general interest—it being the obvious and direct interest of each individual capitalist, to save rather than to spend; while, on the other hand, the general interest of the body is promoted by the extravagance of so many of its members, though it may be an extravagance altogether ruinous to themselves. There is not only great truth, but great practical importance in this observation. It greatly confirms and augments the evidence for our doctrine—evincing, as it does, the even greater certainty wherewith capital will press on the limit of its profitable investiture, than population will on the limit of its possible subsistence. There is the check of each man's own individual interest to

restrain the excess of population. There is no such check to restrain the excess and overflow of capital.

Having proceeded this length, the British Critic is not far from the conclusion, that all taxes do fall on the landed proprietors. He has helped himself forward to it. We confine ourselves at present to the case of those taxes, which fall, either directly on capitalists, or on the commodities that are used by them. Let their amount be five millions; and to this extent let us imagine that capitalists are relieved—or, in other words, that power is given them to live as before, and to vest an additional five millions in trade. The whole controversy resolves itself into the question, whether this investiture will or will not be made by them. It were readily admitted, we believe, on all hands, that they would make the investiture, had the taxes, thus remitted to them, been laid on the articles in which they deal; nor is there any other conception of the effect, than, that to relieve a trade of any imposts under which it labours, is just in that proportion to enlarge it. And is there any difference, we would ask, with Mr Perronet Thomson—whether these taxes have been laid on the articles in which they trade, or on the articles which themselves consume? With the remission of either sort of taxes, it is evident, they obtain the same power of extending their business; and we see no such difference in the moral forces, brought into operation by the one way or the other of it, as at all to comprehend how it is, that they will not have the same disposition to extend

it. With the phenomenon before our eyes, of the capital of the country constantly pressing on the limit of its profitable investiture—let this limit be any how enlarged to the extent of five millions; and we may rest assured, that the increasing capital will soon reach forward to it, and exhibit the same phenomenon of a general pressure and overflow as before. Each individual capitalist will strain, as before, for his own immediate and individual advantage; and the general result will be, an extension of capital to the amount of five millions—met, at the same time, by no greater returning power than before the extension was made. In other words, there would take place, a general cheapening of all the articles in which capitalists deal, to the extent of the whole five millions that had been remitted. It is in vain to say, that the capitalists themselves, in as far as these articles are consumed by their own families, will have their share of this advantage. Our reply is, that, whatever advantage they gain from the change, whether immediate or posterior, it enables them in that proportion, to extend their business; and that, generally speaking, their willingness to extend it keeps pace with their ability. In other words, the whole benefit of the remission is shifted from them to the landlords, who are enabled, in consequence, without being worse off than before, to bear the whole burden of that tax from which the capitalists had been relieved. In the greater consequent cheapness of all the commodities which they used, they would have full compensation for the tax; and, in the present greater dearness of

those commodities, they, at this moment, are the effective payers of it. The same holds good in the case of labourers; and by a process of reasoning, the principles of which, at that early period of the science, were altogether unknown to the school of Quesnai and Turgot, we arrive at the same conclusion with them, that all taxes fall upon the proprietors of the soil.

We shall not repeat the various modifications on our doctrine to which we have adverted in the work; and more especially to the distinction which we have pointed out between the temporary and the final effect of taxes. It is only in the latter sense, that all taxes fall upon the landlords. Taxes, on their first establishment, may be paid virtually as well as ostensibly *for a time* by all classes—for a year, at least, both by labourers and the holders of circulating capital; for several, and in particular instances, for a considerable number of years, by the holders of fixed capital. These are the very cases, which supply the British Critic, and all others who stand opposed to us on this particular question, with the adverse phenomena which they might allege against the truth of our principle. And they are the cases too, which make it just as well, that the commutation should proceed gradually. It should begin with the taxes on the second necessaries of life; for it is of greatly more importance, that a right adjustment should be made between the labourers and upper classes of the community, than between the capitalists and landlords. A commutation, therefore, of all the taxes on those commodities which form

any part of the maintenance of the common people; and an income or property tax, which should be so graduated, as to fall with greatest weight upon the wealthy, is, in the first instance, most desirable. A further commutation of the taxes on capitalists into a territorial impost, may, or may not, be the work of some future period. It were the consummation, we think, of a sound political economy on this question; and its more precious fruit, would be to sweeten and harmonize the politics of England.

CONNEXION

BETWEEN

THE EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH

AND THE

EXTINCTION OF PAUPERISM:

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE OF AN ARTICLE

WRITTEN FOR

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW OF MARCH 1817.

CONNEXION

BETWEEN

THE EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH

AND THE

EXTINCTION OF PAUPERISM.

An advocate for charity, in any of its forms, has always, at first sight, much to recommend him to the partiality of his auditors. He is doing something for the interest of humanity, in the shape of a positive service. He is making a movement, to which he is prompted, in all appearance, by an impulse of kindliness. He is exercising his thoughts, and lifting his voice in behalf of distress; and there is something in the mere aspect of such an exhibition, that is calculated to prepossess his observers, and to hold him out in a light of very advantageous contrast, either with the selfishly indifferent, who care not about his projects, or with the actively hostile, who oppose them.

On the other hand, an opponent, not of charity, but of some of its particular forms, has often much

in the shape of initiatory dislike and prejudice to struggle with. However much he may prevail in the argument, and, at the conclusion of it, may vindicate his character as an enlightened friend of the species; he has not unfrequently to brave the hazard and the resistance of a most unpopular outset. The public are apt to be revolted by that array of hardihood which a mere reasoning philanthropist is so likely to throw around his speculations; and, should he at length succeed in carrying their acquiescence along with him, this is an object for which he must fight his way at one time through the gentler remonstrances of an alarmed delicacy; and, at another, through the clamours of a boisterous and reproachful indignation.

This, in no one instance, has been so strikingly exemplified, as in those speculations about the nature of charity, which were in a great measure originated by Mr Malthus; and from which many have been led to infer, that every public and proclaimed provision, for the relief of general indigence, is not only utterly incompetent to the attainment of its object, but has the effect of perpetuating and extending the very distress which it proposes to alleviate; and that, therefore, it had been better, could the sufferings of poverty have been left to the hands of private charity altogether. In opposition to this, the actual cases of want are brought out in full enumeration; and all the circumstances of pathos, by which they are accompanied, are impressively dwelt upon; and the direct and visible relief they obtain from our existing institutions, is too apparent to escape the commonest observation;

and the fact, the unquestionable fact, is at all times appealed to, and set up in resistance to the fearful uncertainty of committing such cases to such accidental impulses of compassion as they may awaken in the neighbourhood where they occur: And thus it is, that the antagonists of this new doctrine are, in the estimation of a very large part of the community, placed on the vantage ground, both of feeling and of historical example; while its friends are looked upon as having nothing else to urge in their behalf, than the plausibilities of a barbarous and untried theory.

To temper the force of these execrations, it is alleged by the followers of Malthus, that many of the cases in question are the product of the charity itself; that, after a public institution has done its uttermost, it leaves a surplus of unreached and unrelieved wretchedness greater in amount than it met with at the outset of its operations; that it never rescues the *whole* field of human suffering from the hand of private charity, and then brings it under a better and more effective management than before; that at each step of its progress, it only works on a part of the actual field, and meanwhile sends forth a pestilential influence on every side of it among the sound part of the population; that on the outside as it were of all the space which it occupies, there ever lies an unreclaimed waste of poverty, which recedes and broadens, and that, too, in proportion as public charity proclaims and multiplies her doings: And, therefore, so far from acting the part of a more efficient substitute for private charity, she has, in truth, left benevo-

lent individuals more to do than ever, and aggravated all the duties and all the difficulties which originally lay upon them.

Now, without offering to decide this controversy at present, we are led, by the publication before us, to attach ourselves to an object, on the practical importance of which, all the parties in it are most cordially agreed. The object is, to reduce the heavy expenses of pauperism; and, at the same time, to relieve the miseries of the poor. We observe in the present, and in many of the other English publications upon this subject, frequent appeals to the case of Scotland, and a kind of mysterious charm ascribed to that peculiar mode of treatment, which still obtains in the greater number of our parishes. We hold ourselves to be discharging one of the most appropriate of our functions, when we are attempting to furnish our Southern neighbours with such information as our opportunities can supply; and we do think, that much important principle may be educed from the present aspect of Scotland, in so far as it respects the question of Poor's-Rates.

Whatever differences may obtain on the philosophy of the subject, we believe that there are two points on which there is now a very wide and general agreement. The first is, that the ills of Poverty will never be banished from the world by the mere positive administrations of Beneficence. The days have gone by, when the relief of Poverty could be looked upon as nothing more than the simple process of filling up a vacancy, or of directing towards that quarter of society where there

was want, a stream of supply from that other quarter where there was fulness. This indeed was the first and most obvious expedient; and it was natural to think, that in this way a sufficiency could be obtained for all the needs and sufferings of our species—and a more equal rate of enjoyment be diffused over the neighbourhood; while the rich by the act of giving, and the poor by the act of receiving, would come nearer to each other in the degree at which they participated of the bounties and the provisions of nature. This experiment, however, has been repeated in a thousand forms; and even when conducted on the largest and most conspicuous scale, the result has been a glaring mockery of these anticipations. Liberality has put forth her abundant stores in many a town, and in many a neighbourhood; and no such scene of fine or delightful promise has ever been realized. And even when, with the feeling that her present sacrifices were not yet enough, she has put forth a greater stretch of exertion than before—she has always found that her powerless aim fell short of that accomplishment to which she directed all the earnestness of her wishes, and the strenuousness of her most honest and diligent endeavours—and has at length arrived at the sure mortification of knowing, that the object of her pursuit is ever receding from her advances—and that, let her multiply her offerings as she may, there will still lie before her the unquelled aspect of a clamorous, dissatisfied, and actually suffering population.

This is a point, then, upon which we are not called to provoke the antipathies of any set of

men, by linking it with the doctrines of Malthus, or any other system of economical speculation. People have found their way to it with nothing else to guide them than a kind of gross and general experience. Put the case of a wealthy citizen, leaving the fortune he has amassed in some second-rate town of the empire, to the object of alleviating the general indigence of its people, and let its interest form a clear addition to all the anterior charities of the place. There are many who, with no system and no generalisation in their heads about it, could, on the strength of something like an instinctive sagacity, pronounce on the utter futility of such a destination. They could tell us, that this additional sum, if it amounted to ten thousand a year, would just go to augment the numbers of the poor, without reducing the miseries of poverty; and that if, by way of making a still more decisive stroke at the mischief, the ten thousand were made twenty, the mischief would still rise upon us, and hold out as obstinate and inextirpable a character as ever. In short, there are hundreds of practical men, who, though totally unfurnished with science or any thing like it, have got a thorough hold of the truth of the matter; who see, and see with a most discerning justness, that the right management of poverty is truly the darkest and most unresolvable of all problems; and that, in the face of all which the combined charity and wisdom of man can devise to banish them from the world, there appears to exist some mysterious necessity for the accomplishment of the saying, "that we shall have the poor with us always."

And indeed, without entering into the theory of population at all, it seems pretty evident, that should I retrench my own enjoyments, and give the produce of all this economy to the poor, I should only give to one set of human beings what I am withholding from another. The sum now expended in the relief of poverty, was formerly expended in payments for the articles of my own accommodation,—in the shape of support to those who supplied these articles—or of remuneration to those who had vested their capital, or bestowed their industry upon the preparation of them. And thus it appears, that wherever a great mass of wealth is directed to the maintenance of the poor, this is done by a great withdrawment of wealth from its former channels of distribution; by a great impoverishment of those who were formerly upheld by this wealth in the exercise of their callings; and, in fact, by the creation of poor in one quarter, just as you divert money away from those who were industriously earning the price of your articles of consumption, to the relief of poverty already existing in some other quarter. And hence it may be seen, how, if all the men of wealth in the country were to reduce themselves to the mere necessaries of life, they would just dismiss from their service a mighty train of dependent artificers and workmen; they would just, without forwarding by a single inch the cause of human enjoyment, exchange an industrious for a beggarly population.

Without making any further attempts at present to unravel the intricacy of this mechanism,

we now hasten to another position, in the truth of which, also, there is a pretty general agreement between the disciples of philosophy and practice. It is, that no power of inquisition can protect a public charity from unfair demands upon it, and demands, too, of such weight and plausibility, as must, in fact, be acceded to, and have the effect of wasting a large and ever increasing proportion of the fund, on those who are not the rightful or the legitimate objects of it. We speak not merely of the arts by which every claimant can disguise his actual circumstances. We shall suppose that this point can be most rigidly ascertained—that a precise inventory can be taken of all his means and possessions—that every latent source of maintenance can be fully detected, and brought before the view of the guardians and distributers of charity—and that a correct judgment can at all times be formed on the question, whether the present situation of the applicant be such as might entitle the public to leave him to himself. This is the only question which the dispensers of a legal charity ever do take up, and, what is more, it is the only question which they are able to resolve. The question of the previous habits of the applicant for relief, they do not entertain; and, if they did entertain it, they would find that its satisfactory solution was far beyond the reach of all their expedients of vigilance and inquiry. The most galling police that ever was devised, or put into action, by the fiercest despotism on earth, could not accomplish this object.

There is not a labourer in the country, how-

ever well paid he may be, who might not become a pauper at the first moment of his decaying strength or of his declining wages; and that just by such a relaxation of his previous economy as could not be detected by the most watchful guardianship of men appointed to preside over this department of the public interest. They could not go over the whole previous expenditure of his family. They could not limit or modify the multifarious details of his personal and domestic economy. They could not enter his house, and prune away all the superfluities of indulgence that go on in it. They might as well think of employ ing agents to sweeten the tea of every breakfast table throughout all the lanes and intricacies of a great city, as think of keeping up the tone of the people's economy, and that, too, in the face of open and widely known provisions for the relief of indigence. The truth is, that it is this provision which has relaxed their economy; and we may now see how speedily, and, at the same time, how imperceptibly, a double provision would be followed up by a double relaxation. The dispensers of charity are in a state of utter powerlessness over that very element which it is of most essential importance to control. And let them be as multitudinous as they may, and completely provided with all the forms of strict inquiry, and prying inspection, and skilfully constructed schedules, and bodies of men arranged into a curious assortment of committees and subcommittees; in short, let them get up an apparatus of defence and of distribution, as ingenious as they may, they will, in

every one of their objects, be counterwrought and prevailed over, by a still more ingenious population.

There can be no difficulty now in perceiving, how every extension of the poor's fund is in general sure to be followed up by a more than proportional increase of actual poverty. We greatly underrate the alertness and the sharpsightedness of the lower orders of society, if we think that their attention is not all awake on the proclaimed existence of a revenue for their eventual wants, or that they do not admit this fact as an element of computation that tells, and with great practical certainty, upon all their habits of indulgence and expense. It were well, indeed, if they kept within the bounds of accuracy in these computations. But the truth is, that they greatly overrate the power of every public charity; or, in other words, the relaxation of the providential and economical habits is always sure to go much beyond the capability of every instituted fund to meet the effects of this relaxation. And hence it is, that a public charity necessarily creates more poverty than it provides for; that a feeling of pressure or of deficiency haunts every footstep of its operations; and that the evil which it tries to overtake, swells and magnifies, and retires upon all its advances: and surely, when the good to be done, thus mocks our utmost efforts at approximation, and we see the vision of distress we want to scare away rising into more tremendous dimensions, and, in the language of the devouring grave, telling us, on every addition to her spoils, that it

is not yet enough,—surely there is something in all this that may well perplex and alarm us. Nor is it to be wondered at, that it should have done so much to check the stream of sympathy, or to shut its hand, or to stint the offering which flows from it.

If actual want be the only qualification required, this can be easily come at, without any painful accompaniment on the part of the applicant, or even without any such glaring improvidency as shall decisively fasten upon him a criminal or a disgraceful imputation. To relax the industry by a very little, or to let down to a small and imperceptible extent, the economical habits, or to regale the appetite with a few secret and scarcely unallowable delicacies,—these are the simple expedients by which, when once the mighty hold of self-dependence is loosened and done away, the daily increasing thousands of a city population may, in the shape of famished wives, or ragged children, or destitute old men, inundate the amplest charity that ever was reared, to the full extent of its capabilities and its funds. The recipients will ever multiply, without any other limitation than the revenue of the institution; and the dispensers be mortified to find, that all the vigilance they can employ, and all the inquisitorial jealousy they can exercise on the cases and applications which come before them, will be a frail defence against the invasion of such numbers as shall devour the whole produce of the charity, and leave a mortifying surplus of broiling discontent and unappeased clamour, and actual unrelieved poverty behind it.

And here it may be proper to mention, as one of the worst effects of such a system, that mutual acerbity of feeling, which is thereby engendered between the higher and the lower orders of society. On the one hand, there is the harassing suspicion, that with every surrender they make they are doing no good; that they are feeding a mischief they can never quell; that they are throwing oil upon a flame, which no art, and no management, can extinguish; and that at every new concession of liberality, they are to be mortified by some new exhibition of insatiableness or of ingratitude on the part of its objects. On the other hand, there is the obstinate and determined sentiment, that no gratitude is due;—there is a feeling of right to buoy up the nurselings of Pauperism, under all the degradations it is conceived to bring along with it;—there is the provocation of scanty allowance, to feed their discontents, and to sooth, or even to elevate their minds, by something like the movements of a generous indignancy; and in all these ways is there established a strong feeling of repulsion between the rich and the poor,—most injurious, we are sure, to the individual character of both,—and most menacing to the peace and good order of the commonwealth.

This view of the matter should help, we think, to redeem the speculations of Mr Malthus from a certain species of sentimental abhorrence that is often expressed towards it. There are many who think that his doctrine has an air of irrefragable demonstration, but that it also has to the full as great an air of barbarity. While they admit his

conclusions to be those of an argument, on which reason and truth have stamped their irresistible authority, they feel them to be painful, and revolting, and melancholy. They conceive, that upon this subject they cannot follow the dictates of their judgment, without inflicting a wound upon their sensibilities; nor act their parts as men of understanding, unless they stifle every delicacy of their nature, and be prepared to weep the departure of every softer charity from the world.

This is a gross misconception. A disciple of Mr Malthus need not be the enemy of Beneficence. All he proposes, is to change the direction of it. He looks on the constitution of our nature, as affording, in the pain it annexes to the sensations of hunger and cold, an immutable guarantee against the starvation of those who can earn a subsistence; and as to those who cannot, he leaves them to the kindness and the watchfulness of private charity; believing, that every legalized provision musters up a competition against the claims of real and unquestionable distress, in the unjustifiable demands of those, whom the very existence of such a provision has tempted to resign their industrious habits, and voluntarily to crowd that avenue which leads to a degrading and wide-wasting Pauperism.

If this belief be well founded, then does every disciple of Malthus stand upon lofty vantage ground, for retorting back on sentimentalism all her own execrations. He has nothing to do, but to proclaim, that his partialities are on the side of individual and unknown Benevolence; that it is

there only that he meets with this virtue in all its tenderness on the one side, and in all its gratitude on the other; and that, in the ministration of a public and proclaimed charity, there is not one feature of kindliness which can draw his regards to it. And when he looks at the scowling jealousy and discontent which ever accompany its operations; at the manifest hostility of feeling which rankles in the bosoms, both of the receivers and dispensers; at the sums extorted by clamour, and given with reproach; at the scene of angry contention, on which suspicion and resentment, and selfishness, and all the worst passions of our nature, make up one most odious and revolting exhibition:—When he couples this with the fact, that there are countries in Europe, where there is no legalized charity at all, and where want and wretchedness are yet as little known as in ours,—how can he feel that he incurs the guilt of barbarity, in befriending a system which offers to restore to Benevolence all its lovely and endearing attributes, without robbing it of one particle of its efficacy; which is for guiding the footsteps of the wealthy to those haunts where poverty is to be found in meek and modest retirement; which is for dispensing the treasures of charity, through the secrecies of personal and confidential intercourse; and would have her to expatiate on that unseen theatre, where there is no eye, but the eye of Omniscience to witness her doings, and no book but the book of Heaven to record them.

But we have already dwelt too long on general and introductory matters, and must proceed, with-

out further delay, to our statement of the causes to which the comparative exemption of Scotland from the burdens and the miseries of Pauperism, is mainly to be attributed. The fact is, that in most of our large towns, and in pretty large districts, too, of some country parishes, our peculiar system has been broken in upon. However much this is to be lamented on its own account, it serves to throw additional light upon our subject, by supplying us with a richer variety of cases and of illustrations. Like the act of subjecting an experiment to repeated variations, it may teach us how to distinguish what is efficient in the business, from what is only circumstantial, and thus guide us the more surely to the detection of those principles which are of essential operation. At the same time, the consideration of those peculiarities which belong to the crowded population of cities, will not be altogether inapplicable to that case of our overgrown metropolis, which forms the subject of the Report that is now before us; while the suggestions we propose to throw out on the practicability of restoring to Scotland all the benefits of her original parochial system, and of repelling within its ancient limits that mischief which threatens to bring a most corrupting assimilation upon our people, may serve to furnish some hints for the treatment of this great moral disease throughout the bulk of that country, where it has obtained so deep and violent an inveteracy.

In those Scottish parishes, then, which are still untarnished by the habit of compulsory assessments for the annual maintenance of the poor, the

whole public relief which they obtain, passes to them through the organ of the Kirk-session, an ecclesiastical court, composed of Elders, who, in general, are men of respectable character, though not always taken from the higher, or even from the middle classes of society. The minister presides over the meetings of this body, with the title of Moderator; and he, and all such members of his court as have a practical share in the management and distribution of the charitable fund, do almost universally reside within the parish, and have at least such an acquaintance with the objects of their care, as secures all those civilities and customary recognitions which take place among men who live in the same neighbourhood, and are frequently, if not daily, in the personal view and observation of each other.

The fund itself is mainly derived from weekly collections, made every Sunday, of the voluntary offerings of those who attend divine service. In addition to this source of revenue, many of the Kirk-sessions have a small capital, either in money or in land, bequeathed to them by charitable individuals, or gradually formed out of the accumulated savings of past years. But we are safe in saying, generally, that the chief part of a Session's income, arises from the free-will contributions at church of the inhabitants themselves, aided by certain fees which are exacted at burials and proclamations for marriages, and sometimes by fines for such irregularities of conduct as subject to ecclesiastical censure and discipline. From the amount of all these items there must be deducted

the expense of certain salaries to clerks and other office-bearers, in order to obtain the free income of each session for charitable purposes. And the writer of this article can assert, on a pretty general induction of cases in the county of Fife, that the whole annual sum which goes to the support of the poor in its country parishes, falls considerably short of forty pounds sterling, and, in some cases, is as low as twenty pounds for each thousand of its population.

But there do occur cases of emergency which require to be met by a larger measure of relief than can be awarded to the poor, at the ordinary rate of parochial administration;—such as a year of scarcity, or some uncommon depression of manufacturing wages, which, even in our most remote and agricultural districts, has a sensible influence on the price of country labour, and more particularly on the means and the comforts of female householders. To provide for such cases, there is sometimes an encroachment made by the Kirk-session on its capital, if it has any; or a special collection is held at the church door; or an extraordinary subscription set on foot throughout the parish; or, lastly, a parish meeting of heritors, or landed proprietors, who, in general, agree to raise a specified sum, and retire in the understanding, that each of them will contribute to it proportionally to his interest in the parish. Even in this last form, however, the sum raised sustains the character of a free-will offering in the eye of the population. The law may make the maintenance of the poor compulsory on the owners

of land; but the experimental state of every parish in this respect, is decided by such habits and opinions as are found to prevail among its inhabitants. And, in point of fact, though, by the injudicious measures of many of our landholders, there is, upon the whole, a gradual obliteration of the wholesome sentiment going on, it may be asserted of almost every parish, where a habitual assessment for the poor is not yet established, that when an extraordinary measure of relief is resorted to, beyond the regular and ascertained method of supply by the Kirk-session, the money so raised, goes in the shape of a gratuitous offering from the dispensers, and is taken by the receivers as a present.

But it is not enough to expose to view the mere material mechanism of our parishes, to bid our Southern neighbours look at the pieces which compose it, or barely to wonder at the result of its operation. This mechanism must have its springs; nor do they lie so undiscoverably deep in the constitution of our nature, that they cannot be brought out to the inspection of the curious, so as to disclose to them the mystery of its movements. Some of them, indeed, are so obvious that they will not require to be laboriously insisted on. And, among the foremost of these, who does not fail to recognize the almost total withdrawment of that prospective security as to a maintenance from external sources, which must have the effect of tempting many an English labourer to such thriftlessness and improvidence, as are sure to hasten him on to the condition of pauperism? In many

a Scottish parish, the whole sum expended on the poor would not suffice for the complete subsistence of one family. In such a case, every family *must* look to itself: and if they who are at the head of it do not always amass a competency to meet the wants of old age, they do, in fact, look to their children.

And if it be true that interest and necessity are the powerful agents for giving a practical establishment to many of the virtues; if this be the charm, which, in the commercial world, upholds the members of it in the exercise of faith and honour and punctuality—then, in this more unobserved world of a country parish, we may rest assured that the very same charm will bind the great bulk of its inhabitants to such practices and habits as are most obviously indispensable for the safety or the maintenance of its members. If it hold true of human nature, that every quality is valued and held in reverence in proportion to the need for it; how powerfully, in such a state of things, will this principle invest the support and the shelter of parents with all the claims of an indispensable obligation! What a monstrous deformity will it impart to the act of abandoning them!—And hence it is, that we are so often called upon to observe, under an economy like this, the honourable workings of what may be termed the epidemic virtue of every neighbourhood where such an economy is instituted—the aged reposing with comfort and respect in the houses of their children—sitting at their allotted place of distinction by the evening fire—returning this filial piety by such

little acts of helpfulness as their feebleness can still administer;—in a word, instead of being surrounded by the dreariness and the coldness and the alienations of a Poor's-house, spending the winter of their days amongst homebred feelings and homebred enjoyments—and at length carried to their graves by the arms of descendants who, out of their own hard and honest earnings shielded the parents who gave them birth from a degradation they would have blushed to endure; and, keeping them off from the parish to the very last, so bore up the termination of their career, as to sustain the dignity of its character throughout, and nobly to close its description, as a career of unbroken and unsullied independence.

These are the grand moral struggles which resolve this mystery—and by which, while the temptation to give them up is only kept at a distance from us, there would be a secure and everlasting barrier against the progress of pauperism in our Scottish parishes. But in many of these parishes, particularly to the south of the Forth and Clyde, this temptation has been obtruded upon the people; and the result of it is pregnant with instruction. It appears, from written documents before us, that there are parishes in Roxburghshire, where, within less than half a century, and since the principle of legal assessments has come to be habitually acted upon, the expense of the poor has increased tenfold;—and we have one particularly in our eye, where the whole money expended comes considerably above the rate of two hundred pounds a year for each thousand of its population.

There is another parish in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where, upon the recollection of a verbal statement made some time ago to the writer of this article, there has been an increase of the annual charge from fifty to four hundred pounds in the space of twenty years,—and that too, contemporaneous with the introduction of the method of assessments.

We now proceed to other principles more latent perhaps, but certainly not less powerful in their operation. When once this regular system of levying the supplies of pauperism is introduced, it robs the whole sum which is given, of the expression that it once had of a free-will offering. A little reflection will serve to convince the reader how much this one circumstance tends to undermine that delicate reluctance on the part of the receiver, which, in truth, forms one great moral barrier against the extension of pauperism. A man may feel ashamed to accept as a favour that which he has no objection whatever to pocket as his due; and he may even feel elevated on obtaining, as the fruit of a legal victory, what would have hurt and degraded him in the shape of a donation. Under the new system of things, there is something like the buoyancy of a generous sentiment, to displace that conscious humiliation, which, under the old system, is strongly associated with the act of becoming a dependant on the charity of the public. That salutary recoil, which, in the unadulterated parishes of the North, is operating with so much vigour at this very hour, is completely overborne by that other set of in

ward movements which swell out, and which even elevate the heart, when the possessor of it is employed in what he thinks the work of a spirited and a rightful vindication. This was strikingly exemplified a few months ago in Glasgow and its neighbourhood, where the contest for a legal maintenance was maintained with all the zeal and dignity of that more generous contest which has for its object, the establishment of the political rights and liberties of the commonwealth, and where one of the most munificent subscriptions in the empire for the relief of the industrious operatives, was eyed by the principal champions in this controversy, with evident feelings of dissatisfaction and disdain. This may serve to prove how surely and how tremendously this mischief carries in it the principles of its own acceleration—how those very feelings of self-respect, which, under the system of voluntary relief, act as such powerful guardians to defend the access of pauperism, this system of legal and compulsory relief enlists to a certain degree upon its own side, and turns them into harbingers for speeding and preparing the way to its own practical extension—how it inverts before the eyes of the people all the images of glory—and leads them to vaunt in a condition of society, from which every man, who has the true soul and sense of dignity within him, will do his uttermost to rescue himself, and all who belong to him.

And here we should not be afraid to make our appeal to the best sensibilities of the people themselves, and are confident of an echoing testimony

from many a bosom. Which, we could safely ask, at least in our own country, which is nobler—to struggle unseen with the difficulties of your situation, or to lay open your house and your circumstances to the scowl of an official inquisitor? Or if these difficulties are like to overmatch you—whether it would not come home to your feelings in the form of a kindlier application, that the helping hand of a secret and invisible friend was stretched forth to relieve you, than that your degradation should be obtruded upon the face of day, or be indelibly engraven in the registers of a public institution? Which of the two would be more cheering to your family—the visit of an affectionate neighbour, who knows your misfortunes and your worth, and is ready to shower upon you the tenderness of his silent ministrations—or that you should swell the number of applicants who troop around Public Benevolence as she sits on her elevated chair, and deals out her weekly allowances with all the point and rigour of an attorney? These, however, are the mortifications which every instituted provision for the poor is sure to bring along with it—and that too without any abatement of the ills of poverty, but with a sore and increasing aggravation of them. How infinitely desirable would it then be, if these safe and simple practices could be restored to their full operation, by the universal adoption of which, all subscriptions would henceforward be uncalled for, and all the hateful degradation of legalized charity be conclusively and for ever done away!

But we must go back again to the case of a

country parish, and see in what possible way its wholesome economy can be transferred to the crowded population of a great city.

We will venture to say, that one of the most powerful checks to pauperism, in a small parish, is the personal acquaintance which the members of every distinct vicinity in that parish have with each other. This circumstance operates in a variety of ways, and all of them on the side of augmenting and fortifying the repugnancy of our peasantry against the condition of pauperism. The exposure of one's degradation in the eyes of his fellow-men, is at all times painful; but the pain is inconceivably heightened, when this takes place in the sight of those with whom for years we have been in terms of familiar converse, among whom we have maintained, down to the present period of our history, the standing of an equal estimation, with whom we are every day in the habit of exchanging the notices and the civilities of good neighbourhood, and before whom, therefore, it may be quite unsufferable to make a visible descent amongst the wretched dependants upon the charity of the parish. We know not a single antipathy of more powerful and practical operation than this; and to prove how much it is sustained by a long established acquaintance with the surrounding observers, it is only necessary to mention, that nothing is more common amongst the families of our poor than the utter extinction of this delicacy, so soon as they are removed from those external circumstances by which it is excited. When a family moves from one parish to another,

they get beyond the sphere of that moral control which we have now been insisting on. A degrading exhibition in the eye of those new neighbours among whom they have come, is far less insupportable than the same exhibition in the eye of those old neighbours whom they have left, and with whom they have left all those restraints and delicacies, which grew stronger every year, by all the habits and all the recollections of a prolonged association. There is not a more frequent complaint among the administrators of parochial charity, than the trouble and encroachments to which they are exposed from the rapacity of newcomers. There is not a more frequent topic of exultation, than the superior delicacy and tone of character which obtain among the original inhabitants. There is not a more frequent reflection, than that if they had only these to deal with, they could, even after the mischievous principle of assessment has been introduced, and against the force of this opposing element, prevail, in their honourable combat for the independency of their native population.

There is one other delicacy, to the operation of which the constitution of a small parish is peculiarly favourable—that delicacy which is set agoing by the acquaintance that obtains between the labouring classes and the administrators of the parochial charity. There is nothing that serves more to dignify the character of any person, than the daily and habitual notice that is taken of him by his superiors. The simple exchange of those salutations which are given and received on the

wayside, has a more substantial effect on the general tone of a neighbourhood, than a gross or superficial observer of human nature is able to conceive. And the effect comes to be far more conspicuous, when these slighter expressions of acknowledgment are heightened into closer and kindlier applications; when, by a series of descending interchanges, the golden line of life is kept continuous and unbroken, from the owner of the lordliest domain, down to the humblest of the cottagers; when in the operations of agricultural service, a small and unshifting population are ever presenting the same set of faces, and bringing the men of influence and property into frequent contact with the same individuals; when out of his mansion-house, there is always emanating towards the contiguous hamlet, a stream of obliging and beneficent attention upon its families—Why, under such a system of things, there is already established in the minds of the people a very strong principle of recoil from such an exhibition as will degrade them in the sight of those superiors, with whom they have so often reciprocated on the honourable footing of independence and mutual respect: And this principle is felt with tenfold intensity, should these superiors be both the administrators and the supporters of the charity that is offered.

There is still another circumstance, which well deserves to be adverted to. Under the peculiarly Scottish system, the great mass of the people are contributors to the parish charity. It is felt and acted upon as a creditable thing on the part of

men in the labouring classes, to give their mite to the weekly collection. It is needless to expatiate on the effect of this, in widening the distance of all their habits, and of all their inclinations from a state of pauperism. A man who has been, throughout the great bulk of his life, a giver, stands separated, in virtue of that very practice, by a more impassable interval, from the humble condition of a receiver. The higher the station is which he now occupies, the greater will be his reluctance to descend from it. And when, in addition to this, we consider that these humble contributors are scattered throughout the great mass of the population; that, removed by a narrow space from pauperism, they are in daily and familiar contact with those who are standing upon the verge of it, and struggling against the necessity of an entrance; when the fear and the disgrace of being burdensome, are aggravated by the consideration, that the burden, instead of being confined to the great and the lofty, is extended, through the medium of pulpit-addresses and announcements of special collection, to the very men who live beside them, and with whom they have associated for years on terms of perfect equality; we may, without any great reach of penetration, comprehend how, under such a constitution of matters, there will, among a tolerably enlightened people, be an effectual barrier in the working of their own hearts, and in the spontaneous movement of their own native and untaught delicacies, against the extension of a degrading pauperism.

The introduction of legal assessments, however,

has paralyzed the whole of this machinery. There has been a very natural decline in the amount of the weekly collections, in all those parishes where this method has been instituted. The money given to the poor has lost its original character of a free-will offering, and is now given and received in the shape of an extorted right from the wealthier to the humbler classes of the community. It is true, that, in country parishes, some of the circumstances now specified do still continue to operate in a certain degree, and to restrain the celerity of those advances, by which the border counties of Scotland are fast hastening to a state of assimilation with the sister kingdom. But, with the exception of a few cases, which may be afterwards adverted to, there has in truth been a very rapid acceleration of a mischief which is entailing a heavy burden upon the country, and deteriorating the character of its people, without adding one particle to their enjoyments.

Now we cannot fail to perceive how, in cities, where all the restraints that have now been enumerated are of so much feebler operation, this acceleration must be still more alarming. The control of the immediate neighbourhood over a man's sense of dignity is scarcely felt at all in those places where families may live together for years in a state of juxtaposition, and never exchange one note of acquaintanceship with each other. In the density of such a compact and crowded mass, individuals and families are scarcely within sight of each other; and the power which lies in that nearer and more intimate observation which is exercised

by those few who are familiar with him who is just standing on the brink of pauperism, is in a great measure diluted by the generalities of that more distant intercourse which every inhabitant of a city may carry on with people who take no concern in his affairs, and exercise no inspection over them.

And again, as to the personal knowledge that subsists between the recipients and the administrators of charity—as to that tie of acquaintanceship which carries so many hidden, but effective influences along with it—as to those frequent recognitions of civility which go in a manner to equalize the two parties, and of course to stir up in one of them a sense of shame that will both restrain the approaches of those who have not yet entered into pauperism, and temper the applications of those who have already got within its limits—as to all this, we say, there is one important peculiarity of management in most of our large towns in Scotland, which has nearly the effect of annihilating this salutary counteraction altogether. The management we allude to, is that in virtue of which all the distinct parochial supplies are combined into one fund, and the whole business of the city poor brought under one ultimate superintendence. This widens still more the distance between the receivers and the dispensers; and we know of nothing which tends more effectually to extinguish all the powerful, though latent delicacies to which we have just been adverting—nothing that serves so surely to exclude the operation of honest and ingenuous feelings from this adminis-

tration—nothing that so substitutes the hardness and repulsiveness of mere officiality in this administration, and turns the whole business of it into a warfare of opposing interests between men who know as little, and care as little, for each other, as if they had met upon an arena of combat from different quarters of the globe—nothing, in short, that so sweeps away every moral barrier against the extension of this sore and hitherto unmanageable evil; that so engenders hostility and prejudice between the givers and the receivers; that so fortifies the one in the determination to give as little, and the other to obtain as much as they possibly can; that so transforms the whole interchange into one of the most unkindly, litigious and disdainful character. And, after it has come to this, after such an attitude has been once taken, after the gauntlet of defiance has thus been thrown down, and the field of public charity has been turned into a scene of angry contention between the givers and the receivers, let the former be as firm and as vigilant, and as sagacious as they may, they will never be able to stem the torrent of mischief that has set in upon their city. Under all its fluctuations of prosperity and adversity, they will be astonished at the steady progress of a disease which gathers and makes head against them with every new grant that is awarded to the poor, and every new contribution that is laid upon the wealthy: And, so long as this unwieldy system of a general and extended management is persevered in, a system which encumbers its agents with a list of distant and unknown cases, it will be the

infallible experience of each successive year, that the pauperism of a city population is of all concerns the most helpless and the most inextricable.

If these premises be admitted, the obvious conclusion is, that this general management should resolve itself into a number of independent and elementary portions. The mass of every city population should be broken up into sections. There should be an instantaneous recurrence to the system of separate parochial managements; and it would go in part to restore the operation of the extinguished delicacies, were the agents of each separate management residents in the respective parishes, and did each parish defray the whole expense of its own poor.

There is one obvious benefit that would result from this arrangement. It would take off from that seducing air of magnificence which marks the charitable operations of a city, when the distress or difficulty of the times calls it out to some great undertaking. The separate and independent movements of each small parish in behalf of its own poor, would be altogether free from this treacherous ostentation; or, in other words, there would neither be so general an importation of poor adventurers from the country, nor would there be such a ruinous confidence in the power of our public and overgrown charities on the part of our misled and miscalculating population.

We are well aware, that it must occur as a difficulty in the way of this arrangement—that the distribution of wealth is very unequal over the face of every city; that it is greatly accumulated beyond

the average in some districts, and that it is as greatly below it in others; and that, if such a resolution of the management were to take place, as that which is now recommended, the support of the opulent citizens, who cluster together in genteel and fashionable streets, would be utterly withdrawn from those portions of the town which are occupied by its artisans and its labourers.

But, were we to give place to this objection, we should be surrendering the very principle on which we have hinged the whole of our argument. We assert, that the positive administrations of relief, which are now discharged from the richer to the more destitute portions of a populous city, do nothing but aggravate and inflame the mischief it is their direct object to do away; that, if an expedient could be devised for intercepting this stream of communication from the upper to the lower ranks of society, it would contribute, not merely to the dignity of the latter, but to the abundance of their physical enjoyments; that it is quite in vain to talk to us, in the way either of argument or objection, of a more equal apportionment of the burden of charity over a town, when it is our firm opinion that the burden might be lifted off altogether, and that every such apportionment, as the one which is contended for, is only thickening and augmenting this sore evil: and it may be conceived, how lightly we stand affected by any such consideration, when we state it as our most firm and intimate belief, that there is not a single section of any city in Scotland of suitable dimensions for a distinct parish, which

contains not within itself all the capabilities of comfort and of maintenance for all its families; that, were this section, and let it be the very poorest and most degraded, both in condition and in character, which can be fixed upon, morally cultivated as it might be, and that, even in the present state of our people, without any great difficulty, it would be found, though not a single farthing of charity ever crossed its limit from the exterior opulence that was around it, that there did exist in its own bosom all the elements of independence; and that, by a process which is quite accessible, and which depends, for its operation, upon direct and simple, and easily understood principles, the whole system of a country parish, in its originally Scottish form, might still be established amongst our city population, and be made to send a healthful circulation through the interior of its most crowded and depraved assemblages.

We must again, for this purpose, resort to the case of a country parish, and have to observe, that the mere want of legal assessment is not enough to explain the comparative state of comfort in which we behold the great mass of our Scottish peasantry. We understand that, in Ireland, there is no general legal provision for the poor: but, how affecting are the many descriptions that are given to us of the mendicity and wretchedness of its people! There must therefore be the operation of some other latent element in the case of Scotland: and, feeling now that we must get rapidly forward, we once for all assert, that this striking difference between the two

countries is altogether due to that superior tone of character which never fails to accompany a system of diffused education, and to the influence of religious principle, kept constantly alive by a set of men, the style and the habit of whose ministrations bring them into close and frequent contact with all ranks of the people.

It would be a curious, and certainly a most important inquiry, though we have not leisure to prosecute it at length, to ascertain the precise influence of Christianity upon a people, in as far as it affects their disposition to pauperism. It is clear, that the direct, or what may be called the preceptive influence of this religion, is all on the side of a most strenuous habit and principle of independence—that the man who has submitted his whole heart to its lessons, will recoil from the act of receiving, because he knows that "it is more blessed to give than to receive,"—that he will catch the spirit of the Apostle, who "laboured with his own hands, rather than be burdensome," that he will proceed upon the dictate of the apostle, who declared, that, "if a man would not work, neither should he eat:"—and that thus, even a literal adherence to the formal and direct prescriptions of the Bible, will, with every genuine disciple of that book, ensure a habit of most determined resistance, not merely to the degradation, but to what he must account the positive criminality of this condition, if he can at all save himself from it, by the exertions of his own industry, and the frugality of his own management. It is obvious, however, that such a close and unex-

cepted application of Scripture to all the points and varieties of human conduct, is but rarely exemplified. There do occur most affecting and honourable examples of it, even among the very humblest parishioners whom a clergyman has to do with. But we will not say, that the effect of Christianity in restraining pauperism, will, upon this principle *alone*, extend itself beyond a small proportion of the individuals in a country.

But a vast deal more in the way of influence is to be attributed to the indirect operation of Christianity on the general tone of feeling and of character. A man in cultivated life would recoil from an act of falsehood, not because he has been rebuked out of this vice by the lessons of an authoritative code, but because his whole habit, formed as it insensibly is by the circumstances which surround him, carries along with it an utter contempt and disinclination for so odious a transgression upon all right and honourable principle. And thus it is with Christianity in reference to pauperism. Out of its code there may be gathered materials for rearing a direct barrier against the progress of this malady among the people. But the main agency of this system of instruction lies in the general refinement and elevation which it imparts to the character of those who are the subjects of it. An educated peasant, familiarized to his Bible, and observing a close and interested attendance on the weekly instructions of his minister, and soothed by the tenderness of his counsel and ministrations, and raised to self-esteem by the civility of his occasional visits, and the object of

courteous attentions from the person he loves and holds in reverence—why there is positively upon such a man an exaltation of soul and of sentiment which has gathered itself insensibly out of those daily and ever-recurring influences by which he is surrounded; and there is formed upon him a fineness of moral complexion which would be revolted by the humiliations of pauperism; and he would shrink from this condition of life, not because he has been directly and categorically so taught, but because the whole of his moral education has furnished him with a set of delicate and dignified antipathies, which lead him to nauseate the descent, and feel it to be ignoble. And when we think how widely and how generally this charm may spread itself, even where there is not that universality given to the preceptive influence of Scripture which leads to a close and a scrupulous application of all its lessons, we may see how, by the institution of an acceptable and an efficient Christian ministry in the land, there is raised a powerful safeguard against that degradation of character among the people which sustains the whole fabric of pauperism, and forms the real secret on which we can explain the might and the mystery of all its accelerations.

This second cause will, in our apprehension, tell on a greater number of people than the former. But what perhaps is of more consequence than both of these put together, is the reflective power of dignified and honourable example emanating from the few who receive an impression from Christianity, on the many who do not, and who,

we fear, constitute the great mass of our population. It is a fine remark of a living writer, that Christianity may elevate the general standard of morals among a people, even though a very small proportion of them shall, in the whole sense and significancy of the term, become Christians. The secondary influence of that admiration which is sure to be excited by the display of Christian accomplishments, will lead to the imitation of them under the influence of other and subordinate principles than those which are suggested by Christianity itself. And this holds most conspicuously true in the present question. Let but one-tenth of the labouring population be distinguished, through the operation of the two former causes, by their honourable exemption from the degradations of pauperism—and let them, only, come into daily exhibition and comparison with the people of the neighbourhood around them,—and their example will spread: An homage will be paid to this superiority of condition and of character, even by those who have not been at all touched, either by the direct or the indirect influence of Christianity: The standard of feeling and of conception will be elevated throughout the great mass of the population: And while this third cause operates, we believe, more extensively than the two former in conjunction; yet, as it is subordinate to them, we cannot but essentially attach it to the exertions of a Christian clergy and a pure system of Christian instruction.

This supplies us with another important contrast between a city and a country population. The

latter, as we have attempted to explain, are surrounded by a set of circumstances more favourable for calling forth all those wholesome and opposing delicacies which go to counteract the progress of pauperism. But circumstances will not of themselves produce this effect. They must have a character on which to operate; and this most important element is far more readily supplied in the country, inasmuch as the people there are greatly more under the influence of moral and religious tuition. The truth is, that in cities, furnished as they are at present with an apparatus of Christian instruction so scanty, that the minister and his people stand at a most impracticable distance from each other, it is positively not in his power to expatiate amongst them, with any degree of effect, in the way of family ministrations. That church in which he holds forth his weekly exhibition, will not accommodate beyond a very small proportion of his parishioners; and, as if to dilute the beneficial influence still more, and to scatter it away into imperceptible fragments, it is the practice of our largest towns to open up a competition for seats to the whole population, without any preference given whatever to the parish over which the minister has the charge. This not only overburdens him with a distinct and additional concern, but it loosens the connexion between his personal influence, and that geographical district over which he has the nominal superintendence. And thus it is, that the great mass of our city families are as effectually separated from all intercourse with their clergyman, as if they lived in a

state of heathenism. That intercourse, which carries so much of the soothing effect of tenderness along with it—upon which the minister of a country parish may go forth with all his affections flying before him—where, at every step of this interesting progress, he is accompanied by a gladdening and refreshing influence with which he enters into every cottage, and cheers and elevates the very humblest of its inhabitants—an influence which may be so oft repeated as to make the clergyman the personal acquaintance of each of his parishioners—an influence which every sickness, and every death, brings home with a new accession of principle and of power to each groupe and each vicinity in his district—an influence, under the fostering efficacy of which the character of a neighbourhood is sustained, and the whole virulence of that disease which we are now combating, is far more surely counterworked than by all that human skilfulness can devise, apart from the great moral element we want to put into operation:—Why, this influence is as good as banished from the city multitude altogether; and let him who wields it, ply his unwearied task, and walk his daily rounds, to the uttermost limit of his capabilities, he will not be able to establish either an affection or a confidence, or any one of the elements of moral ascendancy, over the mighty host that has been committed to him.

The following seems to us the most practicable plan for setting up a complete moral apparatus in the larger towns of Scotland. The heavy expense of such a measure is at all times alleged as the

great objection against it. Had this expense been gradually incurred with the progress of the population, so as to keep towns under as powerful a control of parochial influence and jurisdiction, as still exists in country districts, then nothing more would have been necessary to ward off the mischief that has now accumulated upon them, than a simple rejection of every method of relieving the poor which pointed at legal assessments. But the poor have been suffered to increase, so as to outstrip the ecclesiastical provision that had been made for them; and the injury that they have thus sustained has been repaid by them with an ample measure of vengeance. For the expense that has been saved upon them in one way, they have wrung from their superiors in another way; and we now behold, as the suitable result of all this wretched economy, that the sum which might have supported a system that would have alimented the virtues of the poor, and established in their own hearts an invincible barrier against the evil which now threatens to overwhelm us, is in fact all drawn out to the support of another system, which aliments the vices of the poor—which has thrown down the barrier of every moral restraint against the inroads of pauperism—which contains within itself the principles of its own sure and interminable progress, and bids defiance to all that human sagacity can devise, and human jealousy muster up, in resistance to its baleful encroachments.

Now, we conceive, that such is the remainder of feeling and of character even amongst the

population of our Scottish towns, as to render the following substitution in the expenditure of this money as practicable a measure as we are sure it would be most wholesome and efficacious.

Let the sum raised by legal assessments be separated from that which is raised by voluntary collections at the church door. Let the former go exclusively to the support of all the already existing cases of pauperism, and let the latter be employed to meet the new cases. The instantaneous effect of this measure, when explained to an enlightened public, and met by their cordial approbation, would be to give an impulse to the weekly collections, and to do away the ruinous maxim, that it is quite in vain to come forward with any such voluntary contribution, when, in fact, the poor are otherwise provided for. We have no doubt that, under such an impulse, the produce of our collections would abundantly provide for the new cases of several years. And, in the mean time, old cases would die out, and leave a surplus of unexpended revenue, should the sum now raised by legal assessments be kept up to its present amount.

But how then shall this unexpended revenue be disposed of? Let it not revert to the citizens who have contributed it. Let it not lead, in the mean time, to any reduction of rates. But let the destination now be impressed upon it which it ought to have gotten from the first. Withdrawn as it has been from a pernicious channel, let it now be made to flow into the wholesome channel of maintaining an extended system of moral and

religious instruction. In other words, with the revenue which has been left free, let parishes be multiplied; let provision be made for the cultivation of them by schools and churches; let efficient men be gotten to fill them, and we have not the least doubt of such a system being met by the willing attendance of a now wandering and fast deteriorating population; let more elderships be formed, and give them the advantage of narrower fields of superintendence; let a preference be given for seats in each church to the inhabitants of the parish to which it belongs, and in this way a closer acquaintanceship be established between the contiguous members of our population; let the lay office-bearers be also resident within the bounds of each parish, and in this way a closer acquaintanceship be formed between the administrators and the recipients of charity;—above all, let the clergyman, with his manageable extent of field, be felt in the full weight of his personal and professional influence throughout the families which are assigned to him. And out of the ruins of the present system, we should see another system emerge, under which pauperism would be stifled in the infancy of its elements; and a reaching application be brought into effectual contact with the very root and principle of the disease; and another generation should not elapse, ere, by the vigorous effect of Christian education on the young, we should have to do with a race of men, who would spurn all its worthlessness and all its degradation away from them.

There is nothing violent or desultory, it will be

observed, in the process that is now recommended. Nothing that would create an unprovided gap, or alarm practical men with the feeling of some romantic and inapplicable project. The collections at the present churches would meet the new cases for several years. New churches would gradually be formed out of the legal revenue that is left unappropriated. Before the new cases multiplied to such an extent as to absorb the whole of our present collection, additional collections would be held; and, with these, more new cases would be met, and that too by money which retained the peculiarly Scottish character of a free-will offering. But it is not so much on account of these positive supplies, that we feel a confidence in the efficiency of our project. The money raised by these additional collections would, it is true, not replace the money withdrawn from the poor by this change of destination in the produce of the legal assessment. But, to balance this, and to do it in a way which every lover of humanity must rejoice in, there would be fewer poor; the applicants would diminish every year; the seductive imagination of a legal right to a maintenance would be gradually obliterated from the hearts of the people; and the multiplication of parishes would bring the rich and the poor of each into kindlier intercourse with each other; and the interchange of private benevolence would go on more frequently, in proportion as contiguous families felt themselves more nearly connected by the tie of a congregational relationship; and there would be a sure resurrection of all those delicacies

which are now well nigh extinguished; and last, but greatest, the character of the people would be raised by the direct and indirect operation of Christianity amongst them; and, with the abolition of the mischief that we are now combating, there would be made to circulate throughout these recesses of human depravity, at which the heart sickens almost to despair, the goodly elements of peace and righteousness and loyalty.

Let Parliament legalize such an application of the money that is now raised for the maintenance of the poor; and it will do with this very destructive element what Sir Humphry Davy has done with the inflammable air of coal mines. He has turned this enemy into a friend, and made that which before scattered destruction among the workmen, minister to their accommodation. That money which now ministers to the worst passions of our nature, might be thus turned to the object of disseminating its best principles amongst our population; and, with this change in its direction, instead of viewing in a mass of human beings, a brooding mass of mischievous fermentation, we should look upon each distinct section of our people as a distinct addition to the amount of our national worth, and our national security.

Such a plan as this would fasten the eyes of the country upon a great moral experiment; and sure we are, that agents may be found in abundance for conducting it in triumph to its wished-for termination. We have not before us the actual expenditure of all our larger towns, or of the legal revenue that is raised for the maintenance of their

poor. But we know that, in some of them, the mischief has attained such a magnitude, as, if converted in the way we propose, would rear an apparatus of instruction, large enough, and ramified enough to reach to every street and every family of a crowded population. In Glasgow, for example, not less than thirty parishes might be formed out of the overthrow of its present system. And though it may be thought, on the first blush of such a proposal, that no pecuniary benefit is gained by the exchange, should the new parochial arrangement be so extended as to absorb all the expenses of the now existing pauperism;—let it never be forgotten, that under the one arrangement, we have all the fostering elements of discontent and jealousy and corruption, with the certainty of indefinite additions to the burden of maintaining it—while, under the latter, we shall enjoy an everlasting security against any such addition, and purchase a cheap exemption from the turbulence of human depravity, and animate the body politic with such a new and a living pulse as shall sustain the vigour and the prosperity of all its movements, and be refreshed by the symptoms of moral healthfulness, gathering every year upon the aspect of a regenerated people.

We would say more, and are sensible that more is necessary to be said, in order to complete the development of this speculation, and to quell the wrong objections that may be raised against it. But we have already so trespassed on our limits, that we must now hurry on to a conclusion, else we should have adverted to other subordinate

topics, which are connected with our present argument. In particular, we should have attempted to expose the mischief that lurks in that very prevailing system of administration, whereby the clergy in some of our Scottish towns are officially linked with the operations of pauperism,—whereby the moral influence of those men is completely neutralized amongst the lower orders, by the vitiating effects of such an association,—whereby, in virtue of a conjunction so unnatural, they are, in fact, helping on the progress of the evil at a rate that is incalculable,—whereby, with every movement that a minister makes amongst the necessitous of his people, he spreads this corruption amongst them, and, by each distinct act of approximation, leaves a debasing taint upon their character and habits, and thus so changes the character of his whole intercourse, that, instead of carrying nothing but a pure and exalting influence along with him, he scatters on every side the elements of moral deterioration. We should also have adverted to the important fact, a fact only to be gathered from frequent association with the lower orders, that the people in that condition of life give a great deal more to each other than they receive from all the public charities put together; or, in other words, that a system which would abolish these charities, and substitute in their place an improved character amongst the people, and a closer feeling of mutual dependence, would, in fact, make the poor much richer in resources, and surer of relief, than they are at this moment. Lastly, we might have adverted

to the distinction between an act of private and one of public benevolence to the needy—how the former often stirs up a delicate recoil in their bosoms, and leaves their wishes, and their endeavours after independence unimpaired, while the latter stirs up, in general, an insatiable cupidity;—and that the one, therefore, is not only more productive in its amount than the other, but would reach its termination more readily in the barrier of a moral resistance to its operations on the part of recipients. We might then have proposed certain details, by which the transition from the present to the proposed system might be greatly facilitated. But all this we leave to the judgment and the reflection of our readers.

Should there be any who look upon this speculation as visionary and impracticable, let them remember, that in giving up as hopeless the abolition of Pauperism, by some such process as we have now stated, they at the same time give up as hopeless, the character and the best expectations of our species. Let them attempt any other way of abolishing Pauperism—let them try to attain this object, without reforming the principles and dispositions of the poor themselves, and they will soon find that they have been puzzling themselves with a problem, without taking along with them the most essential of all the data which must enter into the solution of it. But, at all events, should any such experiment as the one now proposed, which has for its object the moral amelioration of mankind, fail, then must we prepare our minds for a conclusion far more tremen-

dous than the continuance of Pauperism, with all its corruptions and miseries. This evil, deplorable as it is, will hardly deserve any sensible regret, when put by the side of the great radical disease from which it has emanated;—and when we look at it in this light of comparative insignificance, we confess that we are scarcely in possession of any spare feelings that can lead us to dwell on the mischiefs of Pauperism with sorrowful contemplation,—should it be found that it owes all its inveteracy to a great moral impotency on the part of mankind, from which no expedient, within the whole compass of natural or revealed knowledge, is able to deliver them.

COMPARISON

OF

SCOTCH AND ENGLISH PAUPERISM:

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE OF AN ARTICLE

IN

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW OF FEBRUARY, 1818,

ENTITULED

REPORT FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE POOR-LAWS, WITH THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.—ORDERED BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TO BE PRINTED, JULY 4, 1817.

COMPARISON

OF

SCOTCH AND ENGLISH PAUPERISM.

It appears from this important document, that the principle of compulsory provision for the poor, took its rise with the enactment of very harsh and barbarous laws for the suppression of vagrancy;—that by these laws, which were directed against 'strong beggars, persons whole and mighty in body,' such an offence was visited with slavery, mutilations, and death—that permission to beg, however, was extended to the impotent poor within certain districts—and that at length, with a view to prevent the burden of their support from falling exclusively on the charitable, an act was passed in the 5th of Elizabeth, whereby the Justices in each parish were empowered, along with the churchwardens, to assess for a weekly sum those who were unwilling to contribute. By a statute of the 43d of the same reign, those persons were further vested with the power, *first*, to provide for the gratuitous relief of those who were unable to work; and, *secondly*, to find work for

those who were able, by giving them employment, or supplying them with the necessary tools and materials

This statute continues to be the fundamental and operative law of the realm on this important subject: And the object of the very interesting Report now before us, is to expose the effect which, after the lapse of about two centuries, has resulted from the administration of this law on the comfort and character of the people of England.

We have often imagined, that, previous to these enactments, the whole of the matter to which they relate had come under the discussion of two political reasoners; and that one of them had merely expressed his doubts as to the efficacy of this compulsory provision, while the other felt quite assured of its final success in diminishing the amount of human suffering, if not in banishing all the miseries of extreme indigence from the land. Even in such a situation, we conceive, and anterior to all experience, there are many considerations which might have occurred to the former, and disposed him to be slow of confidence as to the anticipated good that was to flow from its operation. The very circumstance of its being untried, might lead him to suspect and to hesitate. And, independently of this general consideration, which always weighs so powerfully with men of a practical understanding, he would probably see, in the proposed measure, an attempt to wrest from the hands of Nature the management of a case, for which, by certain principles implanted in the constitution of man, she had already provided. He might see in it a

tendency to enfeeble, if not altogether to suppress, the operation of these principles. He might fear lest this interference on the part of the State should relax the natural excitements to industry and foresight, and thus multiply the instances of wretchedness beyond its power of relieving them. Or, that it might relax the obligations of relationship; and thus, for the substitution of certain regulated services, withdraw from the helpless the far kindlier and more effective services of their own kindred or their own offspring. Or, that it might relax the sympathy and mutual dependence of immediate neighbours, and thus intercept those numerous, though unobserved supplies of beneficence, which, in parishes where assessments are unknown, still make up a sum of charity most honourable to the character of the lower orders. Or, that it might reduce the private ministrations of the wealthy, who, by the one act of a yearly contribution, might feel themselves acquitted of all those secret attentions and liberalities which the setting up of this legal machinery evidently tends to supersede. Or, finally, that by the publicity thus given to the relief of want, every dispensation of it would be made greatly more painful to the more delicate and deserving class of sufferers, who, rather than brave an exposure so humiliating, might choose to endure in silence; and that, with nothing to depend on but such compassion as the system in question has diverted away from them—with no chance of being discovered by the charitable, but through such inquiries as this system has superseded—with no

source from which to look for any alleviation but such funds as this system is impairing by its perpetual and constantly augmenting encroachments: And thus it might be doubted, whether it might not only shift the misery, without alleviating it; and add another proof to the many that already exist, of the impotency of legislation, when it offers to interfere with the wiser provisions and the more efficient principles of Nature.

We are not now supposing that the man who musters up these various probabilities, could come to a decided conclusion against the scheme which has been suggested. But he might go so far, as most legitimately, upon the strength of them, to decline his positive approbation of it. He might look on it as a scheme which was at best uncertain and hazardous; and if his sturdier antagonist saw nothing but timidity in all these apprehensions —if he remained inflexibly assured of the wisdom of the regulations suggested—if he resolutely persisted in asserting, that augmented happiness to the lower orders, and augmented tranquillity to the State, would ensue from the enactments and the execution of them—if he looked, in short, to the experiment with undoubting confidence, while the other looked to it with feelings of suspicion and reserve—we leave it to the reader to judge, which of the two should have been designated by the name of theorist.

The experiment, however, has been actually made: And it has had the long development of two centuries,—out of which we may gather its actual effect on the circumstances of the people;

and, as it were, to afford us every advantage for helping us on to our conclusion, the whole island presents us with parishes in every variety of condition, and under every variety of treatment as to the management of their poor. We can point to some parishes, where a compulsory provision has obtained ever since the passing of the original statute; and to others where it has been only introduced at various periods within the last half century:—to others where the elements of the method have been so recently put together, that the method itself is still in embryo; and, finally, to others where it is yet utterly unknown, and the whole relief of poverty is left to the unfettered operation of Christian precepts, or of the kindlier feelings of nature on the heart and conduct of individuals. So that, if our two political reasoners were to rise from their graves, they would have the whole matter of their debate before them in real and living exemplification. The man of doubt would have experience instead of experiment, and proof instead of probability. And surely, whether, on looking to the parishes of England, he there perceived that, in the matter of supporting the helpless, every domestic tie had gone into dissolution, and that, in the coldness of a public administration, every kindlier charity was departing from the land—or, looking to the Border parishes, he saw them fast hastening to the lavish expenditure of England, and with as little too of sensible influence on the comforts of their suffering population —or, finally, looking to the parishes of the North, he beheld that, under their cheap economy, all

the relative duties of kindred and of neighbourhood were still in unextinguished operation, and that a high minded, but uncomplaining peasantry, did, out of their own unborrowed resources, rear every family, and foster the declining years of every parent who belonged to them—would not he be entitled to look on these various parishes as so many archives on which, since he had left the world, the finger of time had graven in characters of certainty all his anticipations—would not he stand proudly vindicated in his claims to practical wisdom, and his antagonist be more strikingly convicted than ever, of being a most unsound and precipitate theorist?

But how comes it, then, that the reverse of all this takes place in very general estimation? How comes it that he who questions the expediency of poor-rates is usually regarded as a man of visionary, or at least of adventurous speculation; and that he who resists every change of habit, or of existing institution, is deemed to be a man of sound and practical wisdom, who, unseduced by any ingenious or splendid sophistry, sits immoveably intrenched within the safeguards of experience? He who would have been counted a theorist at the commencement of this great national scheme, is now conceived to have upon his side the whole authority of practice and observation;—and he who simply inherits the spirit and the impressions of his more judicious antagonist, is now branded as an audacious theorist. How comes it that the two characters have so strangely and so unwarrantably shifted places? What has happened

during this intervening period of two hundred years, to justify such an exchange of reputation between them? The man who was then so proudly confident in his anticipations of good from the plan, has had every one of his anticipations most wofully blasted; and for this, the successor to his opinions and partialities, obtains the homage that is due to a sound experimental philosopher. The man who humbly expressed his suspicions of the plan, has had every one of them confirmed; and for this, he who now proceeds upon his conjectures as so many facts, because they have turned out to be so, is denounced as a rash and chimerical projector! So long as the theory was untried, it was practically wise to doubt it, and theoretical to befriend it. But now that the theory has been tried and found wanting, it would appear that he is the sound experimentalist who defends, and he is the theorist who disowns it!

All this, however, may be referred to that great law of the human constitution, by which we are led to associate with similar circumstances, the expectation of similar results; and which acts, in general, with all the force and certainty of an instinct. It is true, also, that it acts, for the most part, with the same salutary effects. It is very certain that Nature will never deceive us, and that she will always bring out the same result from the same circumstances. But circumstances may be similar, without being in every respect the same; and on this similarity may the strong propensity in question urge us to found an expectation in which we may frequently be disappointed.

It is thus that children and the lower animals can be so easily imposed upon. Offer to their notice some general assemblage of objects which impresses them with a similitude to some former assemblage, and they will look for the same general results. They are not able to assign such particulars in the assemblage as have a causal influence on the production of the consequence which they anticipate. They cannot distinguish the essentials from the accessaries. It were well if the progress to manhood ensured a total deliverance from the errors of this propensity. But, in point of fact, there are many questions on which the heedless exercise of this propensity grows with the growth of men, and strengthens with their strength. If they have been accustomed to provide for some object in one particular way, they never think that it can possibly be provided for, unless in that very way, with all its insignificant specialities, to which they have been habituated. It is thus that they dread the very semblance of innovation, as carrying in it the ruin and overthrow of the whole concern that is at issue. It is utterly in vain to tell them that the thing may be done as well, without this or the other circumstance. They are such circumstances as were always present in their remembrance of the matter; and this is reason enough why they cannot conceive that there should be any comfort or security without them. Every appeal to the experience of other times, or to the practice of other places, would make no impression whatever over their own lively and personal recollection of all the

details of their own time and their own parish. These practical men will take up indiscriminately with this or with that system, just as it happens to be the established one. If it only have the right of occupancy in their town, this is enough to vest it, in their eye, with all the honours of infallibility. Not one lesson is ever drawn from the great principle of the identity of human nature; out of which it may be inferred that such management as has been found to succeed with men in one part of the country, may be imported into another. Not one ray of light is ever admitted to shine upon them from the experience of other times or other places. All is blind and headlong imitation of that which is immediately before them. To talk of any thing beyond this, will sound visionary to men whose minds are occupied to the full with that which they handle with their own hands, and see with their own eyes. Of this much they will have a vivid recollection; and, by their constantly appealing to it, they will appear to stand on the vantage-ground of actual observation. Their persons are so surrounded with the materials and the manipulations of practice, that they will both claim and receive the same authority as if their minds were constantly exercised with the lessons and the observations of practice. They, in consequence of this, will be listened to as men of observation. But it is just the observation of men who follow the mere instinct of experience without thought and without discrimination. They cannot tell what it is in the apparatus of their management that has a good, and what

it is which has a hurtful influence—but because familiarized to the sight of the apparatus itself, think that all would go to wreck should one sacrilegious hand offer to inflict upon it the slightest alteration

It were very convenient to distinguish this class of persons by some short and expressive designation. It would not be fair, however, to call them *practical men*—for there are many of this description to whose services the community lie under a weight of the deepest obligation, and who, at the same time, by their just discernment of principle, and by their enlightened application of it to the operations of their own department, have earned a well merited title to true practical wisdom. Neither would it be fair to call them *merely practical men*—for there are many such who, most conscientious in transacting all the details of the actual system, and most patient in the performance of all its drudgeries, are nevertheless without pretension to any understanding, and are never heard to utter any dogmatic asseveration on the absolute merits of the system itself—and who are therefore entitled to the character of a most useful and deserving class of citizens. But there are others who, on the mere strength of a prolonged and manifold officiality, take a far loftier flight—who adventure, and that on the foundation of a hackneyed experience, which goes not beyond the precincts of their own municipality, to affirm of every innovation, that it is wholly visionary and inapplicable—on whom the collected experience of all the parishes in the empire would be utterly

thrown away—who could read, for example, such a Report as that now before us, and, without borrowing from it a single hint for the amendment or the subversion of their existing practice, would still stand up for it as manfully and as determinedly as ever in all its parts, and in all its modifications—who are both most entirely ignorant of the principles of their business, and most entirely wedded to all its circumstantials—who not only cannot move themselves but just in the way in which they were first set agoing, but who pronounce, of every movement which diverges from theirs, that it is a divergence from the wise and cautious line of experience. Such persons stand in precisely the same relation to a man of truly correct and enlightened views on the subject of poor-laws, that a mere lawyer does to an enlightened statesman, or a mere merchant to a sound political economist. It is very true, that a lawyer may be an able legislator, and a merchant may be an able economist; and that there are many of both professions who, without aspiring to the character either of the one or of the other, do fill, and that most usefully and honourably, their respective vocations. But just as some lawyers, with no accomplishment beyond the art of special pleading, will confound one talent with another, in such a way as to think that, because they can skilfully point out the application of the existing laws, they can also profoundly and philosophically defend the wisdom of them; and just as some merchants, with no range of contemplation beyond the transactions of their own counting-house, can

fancy in themselves a competency to vindicate all the bounties in which they have shared, and all the monopolies by which they have profited :—So are there many persons who, because they are expert and practised in the business of public charities, and versant in all the points and penmanship of the chamber which they occupy, think that, on this single ground, they may take their bold and comprehensive sweep through the difficulties of the general question—who call out most strenuously for matters as they are, and that just because they have shut out the light of all that wider experience which indicates the way to matters as they should be—who, without looking back upon other times, or abroad upon other parishes, have only looked, with the most intense confinement of all their faculties, on the little infield of their own operations, and have gathered therefrom a fancied sufficiency of wisdom to overbear all the reasonings of all the theorists. Such a character, compounded of confident pretence on the one hand, and the merest practitionery on the other, it is certainly not easy to express by one brief and memorable designation. But we shall venture, for the present, to call him the disciple of mere localities.

We may now be enabled to perceive where it is that the distinction lies between such a person, and the man of true practical wisdom. The latter, though often branded with the name of a theorist, never in fact rests a single position on any other basis than that of observation. But he has the art of observation ; and knows how to

turn it to its legitimate purposes. He can look to one case, and has the faculty of drawing a lesson from it, by which he can enlighten and determine other cases of the same kind; and avails himself of the constancy of Nature in such a way, as to rear upon it a general anticipation. From his daily observation of human nature, he has learned, for example, to infer, that dependence upon aid from others will impair the diligence of a man's exertions for himself; and that it both lies within the power, and is in general the disposition of the labouring poor, by the economy of a very slight and practicable retrenchment, to secure for themselves a provision against the wants of futurity; and that the strong instincts of relationship will, if not counteracted, draw a more secure and kindly protection around all its members, than ever can be offered by the cold hand of public charity; and that the sympathies of neighbourhood, if not relaxed by some ill-judged and artificial process, will afford a more substantial relief to the indigence which resides within its bounds, than ever can be poured upon it out of the treasury of an almshouse; and that the wealthy, if left to give on the impulse of compassion, will at length find their way to a more useful and discriminating method of benevolence than ever can be practised by the official agents of a legal institution; and that while, in the one way, the rich and the poor often meet and exchange with each other such cordialities of affection and good-will as go to sweeten every offering, and to turn the whole of their intercourse into a scene of enjoyment; in

the other way, every ministration of relief only tends to multiply their antipathies, and to widen the unfortunate distance which lies between them —And surely if these be so many *facts*, authenticated by the habitual observation of his whole life, he is well warranted to conclude that it would have been greatly better had the institutions in question been dispensed with altogether; and if, as to stamp upon this doctrine its most striking verification, he can point to parishes where they are established, and compare them with parishes where they are not established, and then crown the whole of his reasoning with the triumphant allegation, that the actual result coincides in all its particulars with the conclusions of his own individual sagacity:—Surely, after this, there must be some delusion in pronouncing of such a man that he is a theorist.

But the disciple of mere localities can be made to see nothing of all this. He is wholly taken up with the individualities of his own particular remembrance. Any change in the system of management would break up the entireness of that assemblage of means which he has been in the habit of contemplating in association with the object of relieving the poor; and he cannot conceive that, with a different assemblage, the same object can possibly be accomplished. Still less can he conceive that the utmost dexterity in managing the details of an existing scheme may meet, in the same individual, with the utmost incapacity of pronouncing aright on the wisdom of the scheme itself—that he in fact may be a clever accountant

in the poor-house, and an active superintendent of some one of its departments, and the wisest of all his colleagues in the business of framing regulations, and yet be as little prepared, by all this official expertness, for the general question, as if his only business had been to preside over the cookery of the establishment,—to taste of its charitable soup, or to deal it out with pointed regularity to the repairing multitude. A kind of talent, no doubt, is requisite for all these operations. Nor are we to wonder how they who possess this talent carry a certain degree of influence along with them, when they denounce all who question present modes as theoretical, or how it is that this epithet, in the progress of time, has changed its application from one side to another, and how so many good people have been misled into the idea, that a whole host of practical authority and good sense stand opposed to the business of innovation—when they see such an array of resistance, and hear the contemptuous cry that is lifted up by clerks and vestrymen and city assessors, and the various subalterns or dignitaries of office, and the whole collected voice of council and committeeship.

Meanwhile, it is our earnest advice to Government to prosecute, and still further to extend these inquiries, of which the Report before us gives so instructive a specimen—not to shrink from the resistance which has now been adverted to, for in truth it is far more noisy than formidable—steadily to keep in their eye the deliverance of the country from a system, of which every new exhibition

proves that it augments the wretchedness of the lower orders, and cruelly deceives them by a semblance of beneficence which it never can realize. And, to encourage them in this career of true and enlightened patriotism, we may venture to assure them, that the very men who are now so sensitively alive to the alarm of innovation, will, in a few months after the establishment of some practical reform, yield a most acquiescing compliance with it in all its particulars. The great maxim of "whatever is, is right," on the strength of which they are ever sure to raise an outcry against the enemies of an old establishment, will, in a short time, convert them to the steadiest and most determined friends of a new one. In fact, they will approve themselves to be good serviceable men under any system; and the terms "theoretical" and "practical" will, under another order of things, once more change their place and their acceptation.

Before taking up the Report, we beg leave to be indulged with one remark more in the way of general and introductory observation.

From every page, both of the Report itself, and of the evidence which accompanies it, we may gather testimonies to the deadly mischief that lies in the system which prevails in England, of providing for the necessities of the poor; and we carry our conclusions no further than has been already done by a Committee of one of the Houses of Parliament, when we aver, that this system ought to be entirely abolished. Now, there is nothing more natural for some people than to ask, after

hearing such a statement as this—what system do you propose to substitute in its place? You are for destroying one set of positive regulations: But, ere you do this, is it not a fair demand upon you, that you furnish us with another set?

Now, it should be recollected, that it has all along been our main object to show, that the poor-laws of England are the result of a very bungling attempt, on the part of the Legislature, to do that which would have been better done had Nature been left to her own free processes, and man to the unconstrained influence of such principles as Nature and Christianity have bestowed upon him We affirm, that the great and urgent law of self preservation ought not to have been so tampered with; that the instincts of relationship ought not to have been so impeded in their operation; that the sympathies, and the attentions of neighbourhood, ought not to have been so superseded; that the powerful workings of generous and compassionate feeling ought not to have been so damped and discouraged, as they have in fact been by this artificial and uncalled for process of interference. We deem that, in this instance, the Legislature have given way to their usual passion for regulation—and that too on a matter which they ought no more to have meddled with, than any matter of trade or agriculture, or even of family arrangement. They should have kept within their own province, and left this great interest of the community to be provided for by the play of such feelings and of such principles as lie scattered in every direction throughout the great mass of the

community. They have done as much mischief in this department, by stepping beyond the boundaries of a wise and legitimate superintendence, as they would most infallibly do in the department of agriculture, should they offer to legislate on the rotation of crops, and take into their own hands a concern which ought to be left to the judgment and the care of individual cultivators. We stop short at the simple demonstration, that there would have been vastly less of suffering in our land, and vastly less of jealousy and discontent among the people, and vastly more of friendly understanding between the higher and the lower orders of the State, and, in truth, a greatly more vigorous operation of those various elements which conduce to the peace and prosperity of a nation, and to the enjoyment of all its families—had the parishes of England, in respect of their poor, been left to the influence of such an economy as still obtains in the majority of Scottish parishes. We simply aver, that it would have been better for them had they never been visited upon this subject by the unwise and intermeddling spirit of legislation, and had the natural order of human feelings, and human arrangements, not been encroached upon. And we do think it a little preposterous to demand of him who deprecates the inroads of any artificial process, upon a concern which he holds to be better provided for by being left to itself, that he should substitute another process in place of that which he thinks ought to be simply abandoned—to ask of him, as the consistent way of following up his argument, that he should turn round on the

very principle which lies at the basis of his whole demonstration, and come forth, in his turn, with his specific regulation, on a matter in which he holds all regulation to be impertinent and prejudicial.

Dr Smith, in his treatise on the Wealth of Nations, reasons, and, in the estimation of the soundest politicians, reasons incontrovertibly, against the doctrine of monopolies. He contends for the abolition of this particular regulation in matters of trade altogether;—but we have not yet heard of his ever being asked to substitute another regulation in its place. He has triumphantly exposed the impolicy of many a legislative enactment in the affairs of commerce; but he does not carry his demonstration to any other practical result than that these enactments should simply be rescinded. It has never been exacted, either from him or from his followers, that they should propose some specific enactments in place of those they would destroy. He throws the matter altogether open to the free and unshackled operation of the great principles of Nature—to the desire of gain on the part of merchants—to the desire of enjoyment on the part of customers—and, in a demonstration, every page of which is pregnant with true experimental wisdom, does he expose the impolicy of certain theories of trade which surely do not the less merit the opprobrium annexed to such theories, that, instead of lying dormant in speculation, they have actually been put in execution by Government, and accumulated into a system of practical administration. This is his terminating

object. He stops short with the assertion, that it were better for trade, and for the interest of the country, that every positive interference on the part of Government were done away; and he escapes all the hazards of the theorist, by leaving the whole concern to the free operation of Nature, and presuming no aggression whatever on any of her provisions, or on any of her tendencies.

Now, it is in this very way that we humbly propose to stand clear of all participation in any of those theories which are now passing in such rapid succession before the eye and the imagination of the public. We certainly do not mean to advocate either the potatoe system, or the cow system, or the cottage system, or the village system of Mr Owen,—or any one system of miraculous achievement, by which, through some ingeniously constructed method of positive administration, it is proposed to combat that menacing hydra who now swells so gigantically, and stalks so largely over the face of our land. We would, in short, raise no positive apparatus whatever for the direct object of meeting and alleviating the ills of Poverty. This we leave to the theorists; and we satisfy ourselves with simply asserting, that unfettered Nature, working in individuals, can do the thing better than regulation can; and, on the obvious principles of human nature, verified by the actual result, in a way most striking and triumphant, throughout all the parishes of the kingdom, do we aver, that it would have been the wiser part in our Legislature to have let the matter alone.

But how, it may be asked, can we consistently

disclaim the adventurous proposition of a positive apparatus? In a former Number of this work, did not we attempt to regale the fancy of the public, by a speculation about churches? Did not we propose a mighty transformation in the existing condition of our larger cities, and in the existing habits of their population? Was not this the proposition of a positive apparatus; and instead of altogether abolishing the methods of positive administration, did not we just propose to substitute one such method for another, recommending the dealing out of relief from the produce of collections, instead of that mode of dispensation now actually adopted out of the fund as now actually raised?

In answer to this, we must borrow another illustration from the reasonings of Dr Smith. There was none more hostile than he to any positive interference of the Legislature in matters of trade; and yet none more strenuous than he in contending, that, for the interest of trade, there was nothing more indispensable than the pure and ready administration of justice. And yet the object of a Court of Justice is not to lay any artificial regulation upon trade: It looks to a distinct and higher object altogether—even the protection of society from such moral injuries as it might otherwise sustain from the passions or the selfishness of its members. But in the fulfilment of this object, it confers a most important benefit upon commerce—not by fettering its active and essential principles, but by spreading the mantle of security over their operation—not by thwarting Nature, but by re-

moving the impediments and disturbances which lie in the way of her salutary processes—by securing to every labourer the fruit of his own industry, and to every merchant the fruit of his own speculations, and to every customer the fruit of his own purchases, and thus encouraging the full play of all those individual activities by which the great interests of commerce are sustained.

For the attainment of this object, courts of justice should be multiplied so as to meet the wants of the country, and be readily accessible to all its population. And churches and religion appear to us to occupy a similar place in relation to pauperism. Their great and primary design is, not that they should be linked in the way of direct subserviency with any of its ministrations: It is to moralize the people, and make them meet for eternity—an object which would remain as indispensable as ever, though there was no such thing as poverty in the land. But in the fulfilment of this object, the teachers of righteousness necessarily shed a most abundant blessing over this department in the concerns of human society. They liberalize the wealthy, and they dignify the poor; and they call forth the slumbering sympathies of the former, and the slumbering delicacies of the latter; and they, each in his own district of moral superintendence, draw into a closer acquaintanceship the people who live in it; and they give strength to the maxims of prudence, and the habits of economy, and the ties of neighbourhood, and the duties of relationship; and thus, on the one hand, diminish the number of the receivers of cha-

rity, and, on the other hand, augment the zeal and inclination of its dispensers. And it is by such an operation as this, and not by any direct or artificial agency, which has for its formal and assigned object the relief of human want, that they in fact mitigate or prevent the sufferings of want, greatly beyond what any such agency can possibly accomplish. It is not by the adaptation of a piece of skilful mechanism to the relief of poverty, as its immediate object, that this great problem in political economy is ever to be resolved. It is by leaving the whole matter to the operation of the mechanism of nature, and by keeping in their right tone and action the principles which reside, or which may be implanted in the constitution of individual men:—And the use of churches is to foster these principles, and to supersede that system by which they have been checked and overborne.

It so happens, at the same time, that to each church in Scotland there is attached an organ of parochial distribution for the relief of the necessities of the poor; and in many parishes there will be discharged from it a yearly sum of from ten to fifty pounds upon a population consisting of a thousand members.* Whereas, in such of the

* The following are some examples of the population and expenditure in Scottish parishes,—*where there is no assessment.*

Parish.	County.	Population.	Total Yearly Fund.
Fraserburgh	Aberdeen	2271	£100 0 0
New Deer	Do.	3100	86 10 0
Lonmay	Do.	1627	25 0 0
Dunoon	Argyle	2130	46 0 0
Jura	Do.	1157	6 0 0
Redgorton	Perth	2216	99 0 0
Bathgate	Linlithgow	2919	124 0 0

English parishes as we have had access to, the distribution amounts to from five hundred to fifteen hundred pounds *per annum*, on an equal population.*

Now, to what shall we ascribe the fact, that, in the former parishes, with all this parsimony of formal aid, there is greatly less of the complaint of indigence, and fully as little of the actual suffering of indigence as in the latter parishes? Wherein lies the mystery of these striking phenomena? Can any man be so absurd as to believe, that it lies in the superior skill or wisdom of administration, practised in the one country, and utterly incommunicable to the understanding or the habits of the other country? The English are always looking to the way in which we deal out our supplies,—to the operation of the visible and positive mechanism of our public charities, for the solution of the difficulty. But this is not the

Parish.	County.	Population.	Total Yearly Fund.
Reay	Sutherland	2317	13 0 0
Farr	Do.	2408	18 17 0
Assint	Do.	2479	5 0 0

Of some of these parishes, it is reported, that the inhabitants are so connected as to provide for each other, or are assisted by private families; and that there are none absolutely poor in them.

* Population and expenditure on the poor of some English parishes in Leicestershire:—

	Population.	Expenditure.
Barrow-upon-Soar	1143	£1868 17 0
Belgrave	645	803 7 4½
Countesthorpe	623	901 7 0
Lileby	1200	1764 0 0
Hathirn	1160	1015 0 0
Blaby	794	1391 5 0

These sums are expended on the poor only, being separated from the general sum, which includes church-rate, county-rate, and highways.

quarter in which they will ever find it. If one of their own parishes shall ever be so assimilated to one of ours, as to reduce its expenditure on the poor from fifteen hundred to twenty pounds a year, and yet, to uphold the population in as great comfort and sufficiency as before—it will not be by any notable sagacity in the disposal of this paltry sum, that a result so wonderful will have been accomplished. The truth is, that if a parish could stand the great reduction from £1500 to £20, it could dispense with the £20 altogether. And yet, superficial inquirers will always be looking to the way in which we conduct the ministration of our funds, and expect to find, in that way, the secret principle they are so anxious to obtain. We even think that we perceive the traces of such a misconception in the Report before us, enlightened as it is in its general spirit, and nearly as it has approximated to the truth in many of its valuable suggestions.* Let it be understood, once for all, that we look upon this as a wrong track of observation. It is not by changing the character

* 'The efficacy however of this, as well as of any other experiment which can be suggested, must depend upon some of those who are most interested in the welfare of a parish, taking an active share in the administration of its concerns. Without this, the Committee are convinced no benefit will be derived from any amendment that can be made in the details of the system; and with it, even under the existing law, much may be effected, as it has been both in single and incorporated parishes, where such superintendence prevails; and they think no means are so likely to tend to this desirable practice as giving to such a part of the vestry as may bear some analogy to the heritors and kirk-session of Scotland, &c. The heritors and kirk-session continue to perform the duty of adjusting the list of the poor,' &c.—*Report*, pp. 42, 43.

or the method of administration that this great reform is to be brought about. It is by changing the character of the fund that is administered; it is by detaching from this fund its present attributes of certainty and legality, and apparent capability of indefinite augmentation; it is by stripping it altogether of its pernicious influence in the way of undermining or of deadening the activity of those principles, to which the case of pauperism must ultimately in its main strength and magnitude be abandoned. And the apparatus of churches which we propose, is not so much for the sake of the organ that is attached to each of them, as for the purpose of recommitting this case to its proper and original securities:—Not so much for the advantage of an ingenious management on the part of the New Kirk-sessions, as for the purpose of restoring to its unshackled efficacy the management of Nature:—Not so much for the sake of setting up a cunningly devised system, with the power and the emanating influence of which we are to go forth among the people, as for the purpurpose of leaving the people to themselves; and warding off from them that soporific, which, in the shape of a legal provision, has been so unwisely and so cruelly dealt out to them; and awakening from their state of dormancy all those sympathies of neighbourhood, and all those sobrieties of individual conduct which are the only unfailing guarantees of a happy and prosperous popu lation.

And here we cannot but advert to the way in which this plan of church-building has been most

happily characterized, by one of its sagacious objectors, as being *no plan at all.* That very feature in it which recommends it to us, is the thing which makes it look so simple and silly and inefficient to the whole host of committeeship. The slow dissemination of a moral influence among the people, and their gradual return to the habits and arrangements of their forefathers, form a prospect of which they cannot at all see the effect or the reality, because they do not see the parade or the penmanship of a great civic institution going along with it. To satisfy them, there must be placed before their eyes a piece of curious organic structure, with many turns and many complications;—and unless there be a goodly provision of schedules and clerkships and accomptantships, with such various agencies and manipulations of office as in the routine of their own chamber-experience they have ever been accustomed to behold, any plan stript of such dear and such loved accompaniments, will ever appear to them to be no plan at all.

But, one word more about the plan in question. It is worthy of remark, that if a compulsory provision for the poor had never been resorted to, the people of an increasing town would have gone on in greater comfort without one, even though the number of its people had been suffered greatly to outstrip the ecclesiastical accommodations of the place. The Gorbals of Glasgow, for the population and for the parochial expenditure of which parish, we refer our readers to a subsequent page, furnishes a most splendid example of this observation. The mere absence, it would appear,

of a system which turns away the eyes of the people from the true sources of their independence and their comfort, will suffice to keep that people in the noble and respectable attitude in which every lover of the species must rejoice to behold them, and that, though the number of the clergy and of the churches be most wofully inadequate to the extent of the population. But the case is totally altered after such a system has obtained a footing—and after a mighty annual contribution has gradually arisen out of it—and after a population has been turned into the habit of leaning on this deceitful foundation—and after the object has become, not the continuance of a present system, but the retracement of our path up to the state of matters which took place at its commencement. The simple abolition of the method, in these circumstances, would carry along with it the grossest cruelty and injustice to the present generation of paupers. They must be seen out—and in as great sufficiency too as they were led to expect under the present arrangement. Every expectation countenanced by the present state of things to the present race of people, ought, in all equity and humanity, to be realized. And the great practical difficulty is, how to combine this object with that of conducting the management of this city concern back again to its old footing, and the population of the city to their old habits and their old expectations. Had matters from the first been left to themselves, there might have been no necessity for a more extended ecclesiastical provision, in as far as pauperism is concerned; however

imperiously such an extension might be called for on higher grounds, both political and moral. But, as the matter now stands in the larger towns of Scotland, and with the remainder that still exists of Scottish habit and of Scottish feeling amongst their population, we know not a single expedient so practicable and so efficacious, and into which all who are concerned will pass so easily as that, for the details of which we refer to a former Number of this Journal.* Let the new cases be met exclusively by the method of collections. As old cases die out, let this method be extended by the building of churches. Let the fields of superintendence, ever narrowing, and ever becoming more and more manageable, be left to the pure operation of gratuitous benevolence, flowing in one great and public channel through the Kirk-session, but flowing, we will venture to say, in a degree of tenfold abundance, through the numerous and unperceived channels of private humanity. Let the present ponderous system melt away with the dying out of the old cases, and the parishes in town be as unentangled with each other as parishes in the country. It is not, we repeat it, to any power or productiveness in the organ of parochial distribution, that we look for the main success of this operation—though we have no doubt that, under such an arrangement, a mighty impulse would be given to all the collections of the city. But the substantial, though secret principle of the reformation would consist in the resurrection, partly of a more efficient kind-

* The article immediately preceding this in the present volume.

liness on the part of givers, but principally of a more sturdy and determined habit of independence on the part of those who, but for this habit, would be receivers. We are quite sure that, when compared with what the poor can do for themselves, and what, if not cheated away from their true interest by the promises of a system which has done nothing but deceive them they are most thoroughly inclined to do, all that a Kirk-session will do, is but a humble and fractionary part of the operation; and it is for the sake of the former benefit, and not of the latter, that we have ventured to recommend a plan which, in respect of positive and productive administration, has been most truly characterized as no plan at all.*

Had the province of common sense never been invaded by the subtleties of scholastic argument, there might have been no use for the science of metaphysics. But when an acute metaphysician appears to darken the suggestions of this universal and infallible guide, he must be fought with his own

* In the parish of Dunblane, in Stirlingshire, there was, from 1775 to 1800, an assessment for the poor. The heritors at length, on finding that the number of the poor had increased, from the inducement of a regular provision being made for them, agreed for three years to contribute voluntarily a small sum. The experiment was made; the collections improved; and hitherto the funds have proved adequate, and no assessment has been levied for 15 years. The number of poor in 1775, when the assessment began, exceeded 50; but of these, 19 only could be prevailed upon to accept of aliment from the heritors. Shame soon wore off; and the number, before assessments ceased, was often above 40. At present, the number of regular poor is 10; —though there are 50 who occasionally share in the quarterly distributions.

The collections very naturally decline in those parishes where the method of assessment is introduced.

weapon, and another metaphysician must arise to meet and to overmatch him; and a positive apparatus of defence and of controversy must be raised, even though its simple and terminating object is just to restore to common sense all its prerogatives, and to reinstate this monitor in the original supremacy which belongs to it.

In our last article upon this subject, we confined our remarks very much to the pauperism of Scotland; and the main object of them was to recommend the adoption of an expedient, by which it was conceived that the whole of our own country might be defended from the inroads of this great moral pestilence; and even that part of it which had already sustained an infection from the contagious neighbourhood of England, might be restored to that pure and dignified system which has been bequeathed to us by our forefathers. We shall still reserve ourselves on the question, as applicable to the sister kingdom, to some future opportunity. In doing so, we imitate the caution that seems to have been observed by the Committees of both Houses of Parliament. We have no doubt, at the same time, that the mischief there is only to be exterminated by some such instrumentality as we recommend here for the purpose of reaching an application to the character and habits of the people. But we honestly confess, that we choose rather to wait for more documents, and to have leisure for more consideration, ere we venture beyond the general and elementary principles of the subject in reference to England, or confidently come forward with the proposal of a remedy for

which, in its various details and modifications, we are not yet prepared. Meanwhile, we shall proceed to make such use of the information already collected, as may keep alive the vigilance of our own countrymen, confirm those whom the evil has not yet reached in their resistance to its very first approaches, and convince those who have suffered it to obtain an incipient footing amongst them, that, if they do not speedily retrace the unwise movement into which they have fallen, they will soon find themselves entangled in a path, where, at every footstep, they must entail a new burden on the wealth of their parish, and a new aggravation on the distress and poverty which abound in it.

And first, it appears from this Report, that after the principle of a legal assessment has begun to be acted upon, there is no one expedient within the reach of human skill by which the progress and increase of pauperism can be arrested. We often hear, in the course of argumentation upon this subject, that the evil does not lie in the system, but in the abuses of it. It would be most obliging to let us know what these abuses are, and what is the practical remedy against them. For this is a great deal more than has yet transpired during the experience of upwards of two centuries. The people most interested in keeping down the mischief, have not yet made the discovery. The history of all the parishes in England evinces, that if the principle be admitted to exist, it sends forth a malignant influence, which cannot be stayed by any of the varieties of practical management that have yet been resorted to,

or by any of the devices of practical wisdom which have yet been suggested. And thus it is, that there has been a steady progression of the evil, and that greatly beyond the progress of the wealth or population of the country. The chief and almost solitary example of a retrograde movement in the parochial expenditure which offers itself in the Appendix to this Report, is just such an example as, more than any other, will hold out a warning voice to our Scottish landholders. It is the example of a parish, where, by the wise and vigorous management of its clergyman, the maintenance of its poor has been reduced, in course of time, from £900 to £500 a-year;—leaving this latter sum to be expended on the pauperism of a parish containing a population of about one thousand.* This is all the fruit of a very rare and

* Examination of the Rev. Richard Vivian. How long have you been in the parish?—Nearly twenty years. What was the amount of the poor-rate at the time that you first came into the parish?—L.900 a-year: during the last twenty years of the last century, it got from L.100 by degrees to L 900. What has been its progress from the time you first came into the parish to the present time?—It has retrograded since; it has got from L.900 to L.500. Has it ever been lower?—Very little: perhaps L.450. Is L.500 the amount now?—It amounts this year to about L.600 from various circumstances; from the dearness of provisions, and the trouble of removing persons.—*Appendix to the Report*, p. 115.

A very great reduction also was effected by means of a vigilant superintendence on the part of Joseph Sabine, Esq., in the parish of North Mimms, Hertfordshire; and yet, after all, the yearly expense is L.600 to a population of 1001. The two following questions, among many others, were put to him:—From your extensive knowledge of the labouring classes, what do you suppose has been the cause of the general increase of poor-rates, and the decrease of happiness among them?—Losing the feeling of independence they had, and their indifference about taking relief. Do you believe there is any thing can effectually apply a remedy, but renovating those feelings?—By not paying those who are not entitled to relief, you will re-establish it.

miraculous achievement; and it goes most strikingly to prove, that no modification which can be practised under the principle of a compulsory provision, will ever make head against the bare existence and operation of the principle itself. And even in Scotland, where some mysterious charm has been supposed to reside in the mere construction of our courts of supply, let this principle once make its appearance amongst them, and, as if by the rod of Aaron, all the divinations of all the wise men will be swallowed up and brought to nothing by it. The Kirk-session, with the minister at its head, which seems to many so goodly an apparatus, and to which, by our Southern neighbours, something like a fancied omnipotence has been ascribed, will oppose a barrier feeble and flimsy as cobweb, to the wide-wasting operation of a principle so pregnant with all moral and with all physical disorder. It is true, that in none, even of our contaminated parishes, have we yet attained to the strength and the virulence of disease which exist in England. But this, we are persuaded, is entirely owing to the want of time for the development of the mischief, and not to any superior wisdom of management. We know that many of our countrymen are like to be lulled into a very fatal security upon this subject, because the burden *yet*

Who can doubt the desirableness of the former expedient, and who can but suspect the efficacy of the latter, when he contemplates the actual expenditure which still remains in each of these parishes? And, besides, it is a reduction effected by *extraordinary* vigilance and activity; and that surely is not a good legislative arrangement which requires, for its safe administration, such an agency as is only to be met with in very rare and uncommon instances.

in the Scottish parishes is so small, when compared with the burden on the parishes of England. They look only to the present amount of the expenditure, when they ought to look to the rate of acceleration. It is saying but little, and marvellously little, in an English ear, that the assessment for the poor of Barony parish, containing a population of forty-three thousand, should be only three thousand four hundred pounds for the present year. But it really appears to us equivalent to pronouncing a sentence of extinction on the whole landed wealth of that parish, when we add, that the principle of a legal assessment was only introduced into that parish in 1810, at which time the heritors contributed just six hundred pounds to the poor; and that in the short space of seven years, their burden has thus increased nearly six times.* We have not yet, indeed, in any of our parishes where the compulsory method has been introduced, nearly come up to the average expenditure of England.† But, in the great mass of

* Till 1810, the heritors made up from themselves any deficiency in the ordinary funds of the Session, without having recourse to any assessment upon the landholders; and the whole expense of maintaining the poor seldom exceeded L 600 per annum. Since that period it has considerably increased, till this year (1817) it will be considerably above L.3000. And all this is independent of the extraordinary relief granted to meet the pressure of last winter.

† The following are some examples of the expenditure in Scottish parishes where assessments have been introduced, which the reader will do well to compare with the expenditure already quoted, of parishes which are yet free from assessments.

Parish.	County.	Population.	Total Funds.
St Boswell's,	Roxburgh,	508	L.63 4 0
Galashiels,	Selkirk,	986	225 10 0
Innerleithen,	Ditto,	672	95 0 0
Selkirk,	Ditto,	2466	224 16 0

such parishes, we are in full and rapid career towards it.* It is this which ought to convince us, that after the principle is once admitted, it is mockery to think of counteracting it by any thing that can be done in the way of modification or detail. It is this which ought to alarm us into the conclusion, that if the disease is to be exterminated at all, it must be combated in its principle; and that we must stop at nothing short of rooting out the principle where it exists—of repelling it where it is unknown.

And, that this is very nearly the opinion of the Committee of the House of Commons, appears evident, from their utter hopelessness of any substantial reformation being effected by any thing short of a radical change of the whole system.†

* The following are some examples of this increase in parishes where assessments have been introduced into Scotland. Wilton in Roxburghshire, in 1790, had an assessment of L.92 18s. The average from 1812 to 1815 was L.288 17s. 11d. The corresponding numbers for Hawick are L.311 1s. 8d., and L 886 19s. 6d.; and for Roberton L.61 5s., and L.142 10s. 6d. Parishes of equal population in Fife, where there are no assessments, occur with expenditures below L.20, and L.50, and L.120. In East Kilbride, the supply to the poor in 1790, was L.34 6s. 8d.; and in 1810, was L.213 2s. 5d. In Coldstream, it was at the rate of L.208 yearly in 1790; and L.628 in 1815. At Linton, L.20 in 1790, without assessments; and L.90 in 1815 with them. In Jedburgh, the assessment in 1790, was L.141 8s. 5d.; and the average from 1811 to 1815, was L.350 6s. 4d.

† 'Your Committee forbear to expatiate on these considerations which have pressed themselves on their attention. They have said enough to show the grounds which induce them to think that the labouring classes can only be plunged deeper and more hopelessly into the evils of pauperism, by the constant application of additional sums of money to be raised by the poor-rate. True benevolence and real charity point to other means, which your Committee cannot so well express as in the emphatic

It is true, that the Committee of the House of Lords have pronounced a different opinion upon this subject; and that is, that the general system of the English poor-laws ought to be essentially maintained, because so interwoven with the habits of the people.* Still, however, the lesson held out to Scotland, instead of being weakened, is made more impressive by this testimony than before. For, granting this to be a sufficient reason why a people should retain poor-laws who have got into the habit of them, there surely cannot be a stronger reason alleged why a people who have not poor-laws should keep out of the habit of them; or against the introduction of a system oppressive to one order of society, and productive, not of comfort, but of corruption to another, than to be told, that after it is introduced and persisted in, all recovery from it is hopeless or impossible.

On this subject we cannot offer a more distinct or judicious testimony, than that given by a Committee of the last General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who are now accumulating, in communications from the various parishes of the country, a very rich and valuable mass of materials.†

language of Mr Burke.—"Patience, labour, sobriety, frugality, and religion, should be recommended to them; all the rest is downright fraud." *Report*, p. 2.

* 'The Committee are decidedly of opinion, that the general system of these laws, interwoven as it is with the habits of the people, ought, in the consideration of any measures to be adopted for their amelioration and improvement, to be essentially maintained.' *Lords' Committee Report.*

† The Committee of the General Assembly state—'That it is clear to them, that in almost all the country parishes which have hitherto come under their notice, where a regular assessment has

As the progress of the evil, then, cannot be arrested when once introduced, it is of importance to know what is the kind of consummation in which it terminates. And here we are unfortunately not left to the mere exercise of anticipation; for the consummation has already taken place in several parishes in England, and a number more are upon the very verge of it; and the great majority of them are tending to it, and that most rapidly and resistlessly. From the clear and comprehensive Report before us, it appears that the poor's-rates, in some parishes, form so large a deduction from the rents of the land, that it has at length ceased to be an object to keep it in cultivation! It has been actually vacated by its proprietors; and as their place of superintendence cannot be occupied by others who have no right of superintendence, the result is, that even whole estates have been as effectually lost to the wealth and resources of the country, as if buried by an earthquake under water, or as if some blight of Nature had gone over them, and bereft them of their powers of vegetation.*

been established, the wants of the poor, and the extent of the assessment, have gradually and progressively increased from their commencement; and that it does appear to be a matter of very serious interest to the community at large, to prevent, as far as possible, this practice from being generally adopted—to limit the assessments as much as they can be limited, where the circumstances of particular parishes render them inevitable, and, wherever it is practicable, to abandon them.'

* 'The consequences which are likely to result from this state of things, are clearly set forth in the petition from the parish of Wombridge in Salop, which is fast approaching to this state.' The petitioners state, "that the annual value of lands, mines and houses, in this parish, is not sufficient to maintain the numerous and increasing poor, even if the same were set, free of rent; and

We know not if the whole history of the world furnishes a more striking demonstration than this, of the mischief that may be done by attempting to carry into practice a theoretical speculation, which, under the guise, and even with the real purpose of benevolence, has for its plausible object to equalize, among the children of one common humanity, the blessings and the fruits of one common inheritance. The truth is, that we have not been conducted to the present state of our rights, and our arrangements respecting property, by any artificial process of legislation at all. The state of property in which we find ourselves actually landed, is the result of a natural process, under which all that a man earns by his industry is acknowledged to be his own; or, when the original mode of acquisition is lost sight of, all that a man has retained by long and undisturbed possession, is felt and acknowledged to be his own also. Legislation ought to do no more than barely recognise these principles, and defend its subjects against the violation of them. And when she attempts more than this—when she offers to tamper with the

that these circumstances will inevitably compel the occupiers of lands and mines to relinquish them; and the poor will be without relief, or any known mode of obtaining it, unless some assistance be speedily afforded them." And your Committee apprehend, from the petition before them, that this is only one of many parishes that are fast approaching to a state of dereliction.' *Report*, p. 20.

It appears, by the petition sent up from the parish, that it has a population of 1900, of whom 620 are chargeable to the parish as paupers—that the whole annual sum rateable to the support of the poor is L.1605 3s. 7d.—that the expenditure for three months was L.602 7s. 4d,—and that, of course, at this rate, the expenditure for a whole year would greatly exceed the yearly value of the property liable to this assessment.

great arrangements of Nature, by placing the rights and the securities of property on a footing different from that of Nature—when, as in the case of the English poor-laws, she does so under the pretence, and doubtless, too, with the honest design, of establishing between the rich and the poor a nearer equality of enjoyment;—we know not in what way violated Nature could have inflicted on the enterprise a more signal and instructive chastisement, than when the whole territory of this plausible but presumptuous experiment is made to droop and to wither under it, as if struck by a judgment from Heaven, till at length that Earth, out of which the rich draw all their wealth, and the poor all their subsistence, refuses to nourish the children who have abandoned her, and both parties are involved in the wreck of one common and overwhelming visitation.

Let us not lose sight, however, of the main object to which we have restricted ourselves, that of keeping our own part of the country untainted by this sore evil; and for this purpose, let us go back and offer a few remarks upon it, in its incipient and least repulsive form. And first, we are in great danger of being betrayed into an imitation of the English system, in many of our parishes, by a desire to rid our respective neighbourhoods of the annoyance of begging. Now, it should always be kept in mind, that the great and original purpose for which this vicious system was instituted, was the suppression of vagrancy.* For

* 'It may be sufficient to state, that the statutes antecedent to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, were generally directed to the

our own part, we will confess we have long thought, that in the zeal of regulation against the nuisance of public begging, some of the clearest principles, both of Nature and of Christianity, have been violated. As disciples of the New Testament, we cannot but think that, if told by our Saviour to give to him that *asketh*, there must be some thing radically wrong in an attempt, on our part, to extinguish that very condition on which he hath made the duty of giving to depend. It appears to us, that to commit an act of direct and formal disobedience against the precept itself, is not more rebellious than to point an act of prohibition against the offering, or the existing of those circumstances under which the performance of the precept is required of us. At all events, we see no alternative between an entire and authoritative suppression of mendicity, and an obligation on the part of the authors of this suppression, to ascertain the circumstances of those whom they have thus interdicted, and to make provision for all the actual want that is made known to them in the course of their investigations. Those who are destitute, must be relieved somehow—and must have some way of making their wants known: and therefore we see no alternative between the allowance of mendicity under some modification or other, and the establishment of the very system which is now bearing so oppressively down upon the country. And we do confess, that, rather

relief of the impotent poor, by the contributions of the church, and the alms of the charitable, and to the suppression of vagrancy and idleness.' *Report*, p. 1.

than have such a system, we would sit down under mendicity in its very worst form; we would let it roam unrestricted and at large, as it does in France; we would suffer it to rise, without any control, to the height of unlicensed vagrancy; and are most thoroughly persuaded, that, even under such an economy, the whole poverty of the land would be disposed of at less expense to the higher orders, and with vastly less both of suffering and depravity to the lower orders of society.*

But at present, we are only speaking in terms of comparison between a very bad thing, and a thing that we conceive to be much worse. Considering the matter absolutely, we hold this last state of things to be very far indeed from right or desirable, and should wish to see the distinction well established in the public mind between the two states of Mendicity and Vagrancy. The latter brings to my door a host of unknown cases from all parts of the empire. The former may be so restricted as to bring to my door only such cases of a small and manageable parish as could be ascertained by an easy act of inquiry, and as, in fact, might become the familiar objects of my

* We cannot withhold from our readers the following extract of a communication from the parish of Maybole, in Ayrshire. 'It is also to be observed, as to the parish of Maybole, that, while some pains were taken to discourage itinerant beggars from remote places, the aged and infirm belonging to the parish were not prevented from begging within the parish. It is believed, that an interference to prevent the seeking of alms by the aged and infirm within their own parish is unwise, and necessarily attended with many bad consequences. The system, therefore, of suppressing all begging in the country parishes, is, it is apprehended, the first step to the evils of a poor's-rate; and although proposed, was not adopted, in the parish of Maybole.'

habitual kindliness and regard. In all the aspects, indeed, of this interesting question, are we constantly met by the mighty advantage of a more extended parochial subdivision. Let a large town be thrown into manageable and independent districts, within each of which the moral influence of Christian education, and all the delicacies of acquaintanceship may be so concentered as to tell with effect on the general habits of the population—and, though permission to beg were granted within the limits of every such district, the practice of begging, we are persuaded, would never obtrude itself on the community as a glaring and insufferable nuisance. There is, we are aware, a prevailing, but we conceive a most erroneous opinion, that the poorer districts of the town could never be upheld at this rate—and that, unless a stream of relief comes to them from the wealthier quarters, they must sink under the burden of a poverty, for the alleviation of which they possess no means within themselves. Now we can venture to affirm, and to the infinite honour of the lower orders of society, that *all which the rich give to the poor in private beneficence, is but a mite and a trifle when compared with what the poor give to one another:* And, on the strength of this remark, which may be verified in many different ways, we do confidently maintain, that, under a system of parochial mendicity, established in a town which had carried to its right extent the method of parochial subdivision, there would not be one case beyond the reach of the gratuitous benevolence which issued through the organ of the Kirk-session, which would not be met

and provided for by the gratuitous benevolence of those who gave to them that asked;—and more, that, were this economy instituted, and in full operation, even the last resource of mendicity would, in by far the greater number of instances, be anticipated by the desirable and salutary influence of other principles. For the poor, at least in our country, have honourable feelings; and, ere they made so degrading a transition in the eyes of their immediate acquaintances, they would, generally speaking, put forth all the industry and all the economy of which they are capable. And neighbours have compassionate feelings; and, ere they suffered one of their own familiars to make such an exposure, they would ward off his evil day by a thousand little acts of liberality. And such rich persons as may be connected with the district, have compassionate feelings too; and many of them would rejoice in the object of keeping an honest family from the street, as one of the noblest and most gratifying achievements of benevolence. And thus, the consequent mendicity of such an arrangement, that looks at present so appalling, would never, in fact, go beyond the limits of a very small and manageable concern. At our present distance from this arrangement, we do not say that it could be summoned up by an instantaneous act of creation. But surely, it were well, in our cities, to take a commencing movement towards it; and we are assured that, by throwing the entire mass into such sections, as should afford to individual charity a certain and well known range for its operations, they would do what never can be done with the

unwieldy whole, by all the strength and sagacity of committeeship.*

There is another cause through which a parish might be betrayed into the adoption of poor-rates; and that is, a desire to equalize the burden of the expenditure among all who are liable. We have occasion to know that this has acted as a powerful temptation to resident heritors in many of our parishes. And it may, on the other hand, act as a salutary remembrance to them, that this seems to have been one of the great and impelling causes which gave

* There is an attempt now making to restrict mendicity within parochial limits in Fifeshire; and the plan has already taken effect in some of the parishes. Dysart is, mainly speaking, a manufacturing parish, and contains upwards of 6000 inhabitants. Its average annual expenditure on the poor, for the last six years, has been L.277 13s. This is exclusive of subscriptions raised to meet one or two extraordinary pressures on the operative population. In this parish, badges have lately been issued by the Kirk-session, to the number of twenty-two, authorizing those who wear them to beg within the limits of the parish. They are restricted to one day in the week, on which they make their round, and leave the inhabitants an entire exemption from this annoyance for the remaining six days. It is to be remarked, however, that this number of beggars is very greatly beyond the average of the other parishes in that neighbourhood. Among nine adjoining parishes, from which there are definite statements as to this point, it appears that the whole number of beggars is twenty-one.

We cannot but remark that, under every possible arrangement, our main dependence must still be laid on the spirit and principle of the population; that if the *morale* of a parish be neglected, even this well-looking arrangement may come in time to be oppressive; and we must therefore beg leave to state it as our apprehension, that, if the means of Christian instruction are greatly short of the number, this very mendicity may come at length to be so counted on, and so overdone, as altogether to transform that parish out of the Scottish character which originally belonged to it. And we should feel it as a reproach to any parish, if the previous expedients of secret relief from neighbours, and of discreet and timely ministrations on the part of the Kirk-session, were not effectual in saving from this humiliating resort every one individual who had sustained a decent reputation in his better days.

rise to the pauperism of England.* Let them rest assured, that it were greatly better for themselves to sustain, at all times, the burden of the poor, so long as they are provided for by gratuitous benevolence, than to sustain, at all times, their legal fraction of that burden, after the method of a compulsory provision is introduced—that it were better for them to be singly at the expense of warding off this mischievous system from their parishes, than with the view of compelling those who are unwilling to take a share, to be jointly at the expense of an assessment with the other heritors: And we trust that this consideration will have its seasonable influence upon them, at those times when they are most likely to be led astray by the very just and natural desire for an equality of parochial burdens among all the proprietors.

But by far the most prominent, and by far the most useful lesson which this Report holds out to us, is the mighty influence of habit and of character among the people over the whole of this speculation. In the course of the examination, this is always obtruding itself as the main and indispensable element of the whole business. When we read of such a difference of expenditure between a Scottish and English parish of equal population and apparent means, as that of £50 and of £1500, we are apt to wonder by what power or process of arithmetic such a phenomenon can be explained. Now, the

* "This new and important principle of compulsory provision for the impotent, and for setting to work the able, originated, without doubt, in motives of the purest humanity, and was directed to the equitable purpose of preventing this burden falling exclusively upon the charitable."—*Report*, p. 7.

single element of character explains it.* The arithmetic of the question finds its entire solution in the actual savings of economy, on the one hand, and in the actual squanderings of inconsideration and profligacy on the other: And when, to this, we add the dissolution of the ties of relationship which obtains in the latter country, we have, in fact, the whole materials of the computation before us. Now, this is the precise point upon which the present helplessness of England turns. There, they have to recover a character for their population, which, here, we have only to perpetuate: There, they have to implant a new habit, while here we have only to ward off contamination from an old one: There, they have to emerge from an abyss in which they have been fastening and deepening for 200 years, while here there is not yet a city of our land where, by a measure of promptitude, the population may not still be recalled from that descending way upon which they have entered. It is upon this consideration, not less powerful than it is important, that we ground our appeal to the whole influence and patronage of the country—that we would turn their eye to that which, after every species of mechanism has been tried and found ineffectual, must at length be recurred to as the essential and elementary principle of the health and well-being of our nation. And we call upon them to have a care lest, by a corrupt exercise of patronage, or

* We of course deduct from this observation all that part of the expenditure which goes, in the shape of poor's money, to the payment of wages—a consideration into which we have not yet entered, but which must be admitted to an important place in the argument, whenever we count ourselves prepared, in all its bearings, and all its details, for the question of English pauperism.

by the power of an example which blasts the virtues of every neighbourhood that lies within the sphere of its contagion, or by any one act which bespeaks a contempt for Christianity, or an indifference to the great cause of spreading its lessons among the towns and families of our land, they do not become the guilty authors of a system, under which, all that has hitherto shed a moral glory over Scotland, and all the dignities and delicacies of character which have adorned its interesting population, must ultimately disappear.*

* "Are you of opinion, that where men have acquired habits of economy, it is probable that many of these men, at the latter end of their life, would be like to have recourse to the poor-rates?—No: I seldom meet with an instance of a person applying for parochial relief, where they belong to a benefit society, even when what they get is reduced from fourteen to two shillings; for they have a scale to go by. Such has been their moral conduct, and their good character, that, from the hands of the neighbours, or some society, they are taken care of."—*App.* p. 76.

"I have others, who pride themselves in saying they never take weekly money; and those individuals who never take weekly money are much more regular in their work; they earn more; they are more economical and more industrious; and, generally speaking, they do their work better. I have never known an instance scarcely of families of that description coming to want, or having recourse to parochial relief. But those who are in the constant habit of drawing money every week, let them earn what they will, if they are out of work a week or two, are destitute." (p. 73.) "A man who would come for parochial relief, and a man who would spend all he got, is the same thing." (p. 75.) "Do you think they would be likely to resort to the parish for relief, men who were of an economical character? I think it would be impossible for them, according to the feelings which they would then acquire, to apply for parish relief?" (p. 101.) "Do you not conceive that the habit of providence and the feeling of necessity, on their own part, to provide for themselves, has decreased? Certainly it has;—that feeling of independence has certainly decreased—the desire of maintaining their families by their labour has decreased I fear." (p. 85.) "Have you known instances of their receiving that (from 18s. to 25s.) for weeks together, and, on the occasion of temporary want of work, come to the parish? Not among the persons we employ; they are of

And here we cannot omit another class of interesting testimonies about Savings Banks and Benefit Societies. We cannot but think that some of the

a different description; but among the coal-heavers, and those whose business requires them to drink a good deal, they spend the whole, and are not provident; therefore, if they are a week out of work, many of them are upon the poor-rates; and that is the reason why I consider, if they had not the dernier resort of the poor-rates, they must reserve something." (p. 86.) "Do the poor do their utmost to maintain themselves before they come to the workhouse? I fear there are exceptions to that. There are some we cannot keep out of the workhouse, do what we will, and others are unwilling to come in; some, if they are put out to-day, will get in in a few days' time." (p. 94.) "In those parishes in which you are so much interested, and in which such pains are taken to avoid new settlements, in what way have the present persons who have settlements acquired them? By perjury some of them? Are early marriages frequent in your parishes? Certainly. Do you think the morals of the lower classes have been much deteriorated of late years? Very much." (p. 134.)

"Do children often apply, and say their parents will not support them? Not very often; the parents generally come with them. Have you many cases of individuals abandoning their families, and leaving them to the parish? Not many." (p. 91.) "Do the young poor show, in many instances, a disposition to help their parents? We do not know much of that." (p.95.) "Do you see any disposition in the young poor to help their parents, by giving them any of their earnings? No; the poor-rate prevents that; they must go to the parish. Have you many public houses in your parish? Yes; we have five; we had another; and I did all I could to make them scarcer. Does much of the parish money find its way there? A great deal; the publicans are so poor, from being numerous, they are supposed to do anything to get men into their houses. Do you think limiting the number of public-houses in parishes, generally, would be a measure that would tend to diminish the poor-rates? I think very much; I think the difference between three houses and six would turn many drunken men into sober." (p. 124.)

From the above it appears, as was to be expected, that the abandonment of parents by their children is far more frequent than the abandonment of the children by their parents; and yet the writer of this has at present before him a printed advertisement of last July, containing a list of 54 parents who had absconded from their families, and left them chargeable to the township of Manchester, of whom 41 had disappeared during the course of the preceding twelve month. This cruel and unnatural practice, the legitimate offspring of the system against which we are

witnesses ascribe too much power to them, in the way of forming a character among the people. We rather think that they presuppose such a character;

contending, is now beginning to be exemplified in some of the Border parishes of Scotland.

It is worthy of remark, that the last quotation from page 124, relates to the parish of the very able and intelligent Mr Vivian, who appears to have done all that can be done, under the method of a compulsory provision, for reducing the expenditure on the poor. He has effected a reduction of from 900*l.* to 600*l.* in a parish, while there are many parishes in Scotland, of the same population, that require an expenditure only of 20*l.* Sterling. We consider his last statements, then, as containing in them the chief elements of that arithmetic by which the difference of charge between a Scottish and an English parish is to be explained. For let it be observed, that Mr Vivian has most wisely, and with great success, discouraged the practice of allowing, out of the poor-money, any regular supply to the wages of labour, as appears from the following extract of his examination. "Is it not, then, the practice of your parish, to advance regularly, weekly, a sum in addition to the wages earned by your labourers? Never; and to that I ascribe, as much almost as any thing, the diminution of the rates. If a man has six young children, no one of which can maintain itself, you do not give any permanent relief beyond his earnings? Never; occasional presents, and that very seldom. How did you prevail on the parish to put an end to that practice? By strong persuasion, and by desiring them to try the experiment; and it answered. They immediately got into task-work, and got five-and-twenty shillings a week." (p. 116.)

We cannot close this long extract of testimonies to the connexion that obtains between the Pauperism of England and the dissolution of moral and domestic ties among its people, without offering, from the work under review, one touching specimen of the agency by which all the duties, both of society and of relationship, are again to be restored to the land. "Have you any parochial schools for the infant poor in your parish? A great number. I have stated that the morals of the lower classes have greatly deteriorated in consequence of the drinking of spirits; but there is a circumstance which has operated to improve the morals —and that is, the number of schools to educate the poor; but for the increase of drinking spirits, their morals would have been considerably better, and, but for these schools, they would have been much worse. When did they begin? From the period the Lancasterian and Bell scheme came before the public; I suppose about seven or eight years ago. Can you say you see any visible effect on the morals of those children at this time? Yes; and for

and that, in order to their taking effect, the process of extending such establishments must be seconded, or, rather, must be synchronized by the great process of moralizing and christianizing the country. They still leave this element as indispensable as ever; and it is such an element as they never can supply by their own unaided operation. And we hold nothing to be more certain, than that, after these wise and salutary institutions have drawn around them all who are willing and industrious, there will still, in every country where education is neglected, be such a remainder of unreclaimed profligacy, as to afford a sufficient basis for the whole superstructure of our present pauperism.*

this reason:—the individuals who send their children to these schools go with them to the respective places of worship that these children attend on the Lord's day; the children of all the schools are expected to attend at a place of worship. Many of their parents, who, before, were not in the habit of going to any place of worship at all, have been induced to go, because their children attend there. Thus, they have been prevented from immoralities in conduct, in keeping the Sabbath, and felt interested in letting their children appear decent and clean; and this also has tended to increase habits of economy and cleanliness in the individual parents themselves." (p. 79, 80.)

* "Do you think that the misery of the lower classes has increased in proportion to the increase of the sum for their maintenance?—I speak of that class of the poor who have been in the habit of taking regular parochial relief; for there are many who can still say, 'thank God, I have never been a pauper;' many of them belong to benefit clubs. It is rarely we have an application from any one who belongs to a benefit club, and very rarely that I observe any individuals apply for relief who have been in the habit of saving any money; but it is the individuals who have never saved any thing, let their earnings be what they will. They know they can take parochial relief, and with them their present enjoyment is better than future comfort. Have you many instances of the lower description of people making savings?—A great many. What are the wages out of which they can have saved?—Perhaps not so much as those who take relief. In proportion as individuals save a little money, their morals are much better; they husband

But there is still another consideration which might serve to reconcile many to poor-rates, and which has had its influence in leading to the adoption of this provision in several places of Scotland, and that is, the imagined necessity for it which lies in the peculiar state and circumstances of a manufacturing population. Now, it appears from this Report, that there is just as ready a principle of coalescence with this system on the part of the people in the agricultural districts; and that, if we estimate the need for the fund by the extent of the drafts which are actually made upon it, there is little or no difference observable in England be-

that little; and there is a superior tone given to their morals; and they behave better, from knowing that they have a little stake in society. There are men who can earn thirty-five or forty shillings a week, with the help of their family and children; and if they are out of work a week they become paupers."—*Mr Hale's examination.*

"Do you conceive that this establishment has had a material influence upon the character of the working classes of your parish?—Very great indeed. What do you suppose would be the effect, if Friendly Societies were general?—That there would be no occasion for this Committee."—*Mr Vivian's examination.*

"Do you believe that such establishments would have the effect of reducing the poor's rate in proportion as they should succeed? I think that such establishments, if general throughout the country, would have the effect of abolishing the poor's rates; it would entirely alter the character of the poor. I think, with general education, savings banks, and such an equalization as I have stated, in a few years the rates would vanish of themselves. Do you believe that such establishments would have a tendency to improve the morals of the lower class of people?—In an incalculable degree." (p. 100.)

It is the belief of the writer of this article, that the mere setting up of a saving bank in a neighbourhood, would render a very small and subordinate contribution towards the improvement of the general mass of character; that, at best, it is but an auxiliary towards the production of this effect; and that nothing great or serviceable can be effected in this way by any thing short of the direct instrumentality of education, and more particularly of Christian education

tween the one and the other description of parishes. It further appears, that in seasons of depression, there has uniformly been as great a call for something extraordinary and additional to the common method of supply in parishes burdened with poor-rates, as in those parts of the country where no compulsory provision had been established. And it still further appears, on comparing England and Scotland, that in manufacturing towns, of various business and population, the extent of their pauperism is not at all in proportion to these circumstances, but in proportion to the time which the compulsory method has had for the development of its own mischievous principle of acceleration. We may gather also, from this comparison, that in times of great fluctuation or scarcity, the distress has always been much greater in towns where this method had long been established, and less in those where it had been recently instituted, and least of all in those where it was utterly unknown: All serving to prove, that under every variety of human condition and employment, this mischievous contrivance goes to supplant far more effectual securities against the sufferings of indigence, than it ever can replace; and that, wherever it obtains a footing, it aggravates the distress which it proposes to do away; and that, let the mode of life, or the mode of industry be what it will, individual man can far more easily find his own way to his own preservation from all the ills and vicissitudes of fortune, without such a regulation than with it; and that the only effect of this regulation has been, not to provide for such peculiar necessities as are found

to prevail in one district, and to have no place in another; but to assimilate all the districts of the land into one common condition of clamorous and unrelieved poverty, fostered by the hand that was lifted up to destroy it, and imbittered by the misery of a system that has done nothing but delude the people by its deceitful smiles, and its unsubstantial promises.*

* As a proof that the augmentation of poor-rates grows as rapidly in agricultural as in manufacturing districts, we have presented to us, in the Report, the increase of expenditure in the two most agricultural counties of England. In the county of Hereford, the expenditure, in 1776, was 10,593*l.* 7s. 2d.; and in 1815, it was 59,255*l.* 19s. In Bedfordshire, the expenditure, for each of these years respectively, was 16,662*l.* 17s. 1d., and 50,870*l.* 10s. 11d.

In the parish of Christ-Church, Spitalfields, the poor-rate seems to have come to its limit last year; and subscription for the poor was their last resort. "Provided there had been no subscription, would it not most considerably have increased the rate?—The rates could not have been increased; for I believe, now, if we were to attempt (and it is the opinion of more persons in the parish) to raise the rate to eight shillings instead of six, many would not be able to pay the eight who now pay the six. What would have been the consequence to the parish, if they had not had the subscription?—I have always contemplated, with the greatest horror, the consequences, if this association had not been established." (p. 68.) "Is there any limit to the relief given by the poor's-rate?—In some cases we give as high as five shillings a-week. In the case of a large family, of four, or five, or six children, five shillings a week would not sustain them; then, what would be done? There are several humane societies in the neighbourhood, and they get something there. There is a great deal of money comes from the benevolence of the public, the Benevolent Society, and others." (p. 74.) "You have a subscription in aid of your poor-rate? Yes, to the amount of 1600*l.* for selling necessaries at a reduced price to the poor." (p. 75.) In the same manner, it appears that private subscriptions were raised in many other places, to meet the difficulties of last winter. That for St Mary, Islington, was 1600*l.* to a population of 15,000. That for St George's, Hanover-Square, with a population of 42,000, was from 5000*l.* to 6000*l.* additional to the poor-rates. That for the Gorbals of Glasgow, where there are no poor-rates, but a population towards 20,000, was just 835*l.* So it appears,

We have not time at present to dilate on this interesting part of the subject; but if facts are of more value than arguments, we have them to offer in abundance: And we will venture to say, on the strength of these facts, that the cry of distress from our manufacturing population is uniformly louder in proportion to the extent of the compulsory provision. There are many manufacturing towns in Scotland where there is no such expedient at all. In Kirkaldy and its neighbourhood, there is a contiguous population of 13,000, of a decidedly manufacturing character; and there the yearly expense comes to little more than fifty pounds for each thousand of the population. In the small parish of Carmunnock, about four miles from Glasgow, there are eighty looms at least among a population of 839, and the whole expenditure of last year was £22 10*s.* 9*d.*; and there was not one application for extraordinary relief produced by the deficiency of wages under which they laboured, in common with the whole country. The Barony, one of the suburb parishes of Glasgow, with a population now of 43,000 might have been quoted as an example of the same kind so lately as 1807, when its expenditure was only £687 3*s.* 9*d.*; but, though at present dead in respect of its peculiarly Scottish character, yet, by the record of its former and later years, it still speaketh. But all these minor cases of illustration are lost and forgotten, in the princely

that the legal charity does not supersede the gratuitous charity, but renders it more indispensable; and this resource is open to the people of those parishes where there is no legal charity, and that, too, in a state of less exhaustion, and with more readiness, of course, on the part of the benevolent.

example of Scottish independence held out by the Gorbals of Glasgow;—a parish, of which we are substantially correct as to the argument, when we say, that it extends not by a single inch beyond the masonry of its work and its dwellinghouses—a parish, of which we believe that it claims not a single acre of ground beyond the site that it is built upon—a parish, at all events, which has not one fraction of territorial revenue or importance attached to it, but which includes, within the little sweep of its boundary, a busy and industrious population of nearly 20,000 individuals.* Had it stood by itself, we confess we should not have looked on the history as in any way miraculous. But, standing as it does within the walk of one minute from a great pestiferous vomitory, that sends a withering influence on every side of it, upon all that is delicate or noble in the character of our Scottish population—it would be a most violent suppression of the gratitude and the estimation which are felt by us, did we refuse to acknowledge, that though we had travelled for evidence over the whole length and breadth of our land, we could not have met a more wondrous or substantial testimony than the

* It may here be right to state, that in assigning a population of nearly 20,000 to the Gorbals, we do it on a most respectable private authority. The census of 1811 makes it considerably less. But we have access to know, that in other parts of that neighbourhood, this census falls short by a fifth part of the present population. It is also right to mention, that a great part of the present parish of Gorbals was added to it lately by an annexation from the parish of Govan—and that there still remains a debateable subject of parochial expenditure between those parishes, in virtue of which a certain part of the expense of the former, may at times be shifted away to the latter parish. At all events, this expense is considerably less, and certainly not more than seventy-four pounds Sterling.

one which this parish affords. And when it is told, that the average of its regular annual expenditure is a gratuitous sum of three hundred and fifty pounds, and that the whole sum required for the extraordinary wants of last year was £835, which was also raised by voluntary subscription, and that, among the administrators for the poor,—who does not feel a desire that this stately monument of the truth may ever remain unimpaired; that, standing on the brink of a great moral contagion, it may serve as a protecting van-guard of resistance to the country in its rear, and be our proudest bulwark of defence against such an invasion as England has long been threatening, and in which, if she succeed, she will do more to destroy and to desolate our land, than she ever has done, or ever could do, by the invasion of her arms?

The ground upon which it is conceived that a compulsory provision for the poor, is more necessary to a manufacturing than to an agricultural population, is not, that the average of wages among the former, is beneath those of the latter, (for the reverse of this is the truth,) but that they are more subject to unlooked for vicissitude. It is not to supply a constant deficiency that the system is contended for in the trading towns of our nation, but to equalize an occasional deficiency. Now, we humbly conceive, that, for this object, the plan of a regular and compulsory provision is the very worst that could possibly be devised. For, once establish this system, and there is not one attribute belonging to it that is more certainly and more universally exemplified than its peculiar aptitude

of growing;—so that, even in the very best of times, if you only take periods of sufficient length, as of ten years, you are sure to find, that, in point of magnitude and oppressiveness, its increase just keeps pace with the length of its duration. And, corresponding to this, there is a peculiar inaptitude in the system to retrograde; so that if, in the worst of times, the poor-rates are resorted to for the purpose of meeting some urgent and occasional visitation, they are sure to obtain from this circumstance, not an occasional but a permanent augmentation;—and therefore, in this way, there is not a more effectual method of converting a temporary into a lasting burden on the community. The public know this, and they are up in alarm about the evil consequences of it;—and a pressing calamity, instead of being met, as it ought, by the willing liberalities of the rich, who, if they knew how they could safely provide for the whole emergency, would have a pleasure in doing so, is looked at with an eye of jealousy and dread from the brooding pregnancy of the mischief with which it is known to be associated.

It is indeed a striking demonstration of the utter unsuitableness of a settled and compulsory method to the needs of a manufacturing population, that it is in those very towns where this method has been longest in operation, that you are sure to meet with the largest surplus of distress, and that, after all, voluntary exertions are most called for. So that the legal charity, it would appear, does not supersede the gratuitous charity, though it certainly serves very much to limit and to discourage

it. For, a delusive confidence in poor-rates, keeps back many from concurring in a benevolent subscription; and an exhaustion of funds, produced by this system, keeps back many more; and the apprehension that, by accustoming people to receive, you are just raising and nourishing recruits for ordinary pauperism, has a mighty effect in damping the charity of any humane enterprise that may be set afloat for the purpose of alleviating the pressure of any existing fluctuation: so that, in all these ways, a legal establishment of charity has just failed as egregiously in this particular object, as in any other that can possibly be assigned for it. It is, in truth, peculiarly adverse to all such temporary devices as may be employed for the purpose of weathering a temporary emergency. In other words, it has aggravated those peculiar distresses which are incidental to the trading districts of the land: And, so long as it is suffered to exist, it will lie as a dead weight on the promptitude and the vigour of the only expedients by which it is in the power of one part of the community to lift, with effect, a helping hand for relieving the miseries of the other.

And, after all, let it not be forgotten, that every case of distress among our manufacturing population, arises from there being too little work for the operatives, or, which is the same thing, too many operatives for the work;—that to reach the cause of such a distress, even a subscription is powerless, unless it detach so many of them to some other employment;—and that if expended on the mere object of ekeing out a subsistence to men

who have insufficient wages, it has no other effect but that of keeping them together at an employment which does not pay, and of keeping down the wages of that employment, and of perpetuating a glut in the market, which can only be dissipated by withdrawing a certain number of the workmen to some other objects. And it is truly mortifying to observe, that even the well-looking scheme of an ample and munificent subscription, is just another cruel and deceitful mockery of the lower orders;—that the money, thus raised, in fact passes by them into the pockets of their employers;—and that, in the whole range of possibility, there does not appear to be one other solid expedient for the relief of such an emergency as this, beside the possession of such a fund among the operatives themselves, as could afford them the means of a livelihood for a certain time, without the necessity of working. This would clear away the whole mischief at once. This would give our workmen such a fair and reciprocal control over our manufacturers, as every genuine philanthropist would rejoice to see them invested with. This would elevate them at once to that command over the comforts and the condition of their own body, which they have a right to maintain. This would indeed raise them to the state of a great, independent, and co-ordinate interest in our commonwealth. But this they never will obtain, till they have purchased it by their own exertion and their own economy. It is nothing but the produce of their savings in good years, that will enable them to treat with their employers in bad years, and to hold out to them

the dignified and the respectable language—that, rather than work for unfair and inadequate wages, we will repair to the fund of our former retrenchments, and, out of that fund, we will keep for a season ourselves and our families. Such a noble attitude as this, on the part even of a small portion of our weavers, would bring the manufacturers to reason, and invest them with that power of prompt and equal adjustment which, we are sure, it would be for the interest of both parties, and for the general interest of the country, that they possessed. Now, they can only come to this power through the avenue of their own frugal and industrious habits. It is a power that never will, and never can, be *given* to them; and which they can only acquire, by working their own way to it—by accumulating in good years, and laying by the fruits of them in store for the evil day of some dark and adverse fluctuation.

This, and this alone, will smooth all the asperities, and equalize all the vicissitudes of fortune, to which a manufacturing population is liable;—but this is what the false show of relief, held out by an established pauperism, most effectually prevents, by cheating away the attention of the people from the only true sources of their independence and comfort. We know that, upon this subject, there are some who call evil good, and good evil—who malign as hard-hearted, a doctrine which would restore to the methods of benevolence all that is kind and compassionate and friendly—and who brand with hostility to the lower orders of the State, a proposal, by which alone they can be upheld either in

respect or sufficiency. Such writers have leave to go on with their plausibilities and their hard sentences. But we confess, that our patriotism and philanthropy incline us to different counsels. We want no such ignominy to come near our Scottish population as that of *farming our poor*. We want no other asylum for our aged parents, than that of their pious and affectionate families. We can neither suffer them, nor do we like the prospect for ourselves, of pining out the cheerless evening of our days away from the endearments of a home. We wish to do, as long as we can, without the apparatus of English laws and English workhouses; and should like to ward for ever from our doors, the system that would bring an everlasting interdict on the worth, and independence, and genuine enjoyments of our peasantry. We wish to see their venerable sires surrounded, as heretofore, by the company and the playfulness of their own grandchildren; nor can we bear to think, that our high-minded people should sink down and be satisfied with the dreary imprisonment of an almshouse, as the closing object in the vista of their earthly anticipations. Yet such is the goodly upshot of a system which has its friends and advocates in our own country—men who could witness, without a sigh, the departure of all those peculiarities which have both alimented and adorned the character of our beloved Scotland—men who can gild over, with the semblance of humanity, a poisoned opiate of deepest injury both to its happiness and to its morals—and who, in the very act of flattering the poor, are only forging for them such chains as,

soft in feeling as silk, but strong in proof as adamant, will bind them down to a state of permanent degradation.

And we submit it to the attention of our Legislature, if, in the moment of rescinding a statute, which, however friendly in aspect, has been mos injurious in effect to the best interests of the la bouring classes, it were not the true and the right accompaniment of such a measure, that they rescinded every other statute of interference which bears against them an expression of direct hostility. We should like, in fact, if the Government of our country never interfered with the concerns of trade, but for the objects of revenue; and, on this general principle alone, we would venture to recommend an immediate abolition of the Corn Bill, which proved so obnoxious to the whole of our manufacturing population. But, when coupled with any act tending to the extinction of poor-rates, we consider this measure as imperiously called for. We know nothing, in fact, that more demonstrates the impolicy of all State interferences with such matters as should be left to the natural operation of individual feeling and principle, than the way in which these interferences go to counteract and to neutralize each other. By way of serving the interests of the poor, there was established, in the first instance, a method of compulsory provision, which, without serving their interests at all, has brought a most intolerable burden on the agriculture of the country; and then, by way of relieving the agriculture, there comes out

a Corn Bill, which has surrounded Government with the cries of an indignant population. Would it not be better that all this bungling and mismanagement were cleared away at once?—that every interference, either in the way of help or of hostility, were conclusively put an end to—and, more particularly, that our labourers were made to feel that there was a free range of industry before them, from which Government had removed every unnatural obstacle, and on which they were invited to make their own unfettered way to their own independence? We are quite sure, that such a frank and liberal accommodation as this would enthrone the Government of the country in the hearts even of the lowest of the people. And in the same spirit we would recommend the abolition of every direct tax upon those who were in the condition of operatives; and would either rescind, or administer more impartially, those laws against combination, which have ever been a dead letter against the more oppressive combination of the masters, and very frequently an unjust restraint on the defensive associations of the workmen.

In concluding, we must add one word of explanation. We have spoken in terms of very strong regret of the establishment of a legal charity in some of our Scottish towns. We did not intend, however, to use them as terms of censure, either against the administrators or the receivers of this charity. The truth is, that this corrupt system has only had a fractional influence, as yet, on the general habits of our population. The body of the

community is still sound; and we know not a town in Scotland which is not still in circumstances for that great retracing movement, by which it might be conducted back again to the happier arrangement of former days.

ARTICLE

IN THE

EDINBURGH REVIEW, OF FEBRUARY, 1818,

ON

REPORT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POOR OF GLASGOW,

By JAMES EWING, Esq.
GLASGOW.

We regret that the limits of our present Number do not admit of any thing more than a very short and hasty notice of this interesting performance. It is the work of a gentleman who has filled a number of city offices in Glasgow, and has taken a very laborious and distinguished share in the management of its public business. In any circumstances, such a book would do credit to its author, as evincing a mind enlightened by those great principles, which will, in all probability, be misunderstood and misrepresented for some time longer—but which, we cannot doubt, are destined at last to find their way to general approbation.

In the mean time, this work exhibits the testimony of a practical and experienced man in favour of these principles—and is chiefly to be valued, as

offering to us the rare example of one versant in all the details of an existing management; and yet able, by his powers of generalization, both clearly to perceive, and vigorously to point out, the radical vice by which it is pervaded, and rendered utterly incompetent to its professed object. Were we asked to station an observer at the most *unfavourable* point, from which to survey any system of management, with a view to estimate its merits and its general tendency—we would place him in the centre of the system itself—we would close him round by its complicated machinery—and task him with the routine of some prescribed and uniform operation. This, which is generally thought to be the very best station for acquiring right views on the subject of pauperism, is, in fact, with most men, the very worst: And, what reflects the highest credit on the author of this work, is, that he has surmounted the difficulties of so unfavourable a situation; and, while beset by the confinements of a local experience, has obtained a firm hold of the lessons of an universal experience.

The difference, however, between some of his specific plans and his general principles, must be perceived by every reader: and such, in fact, is the amount of this difference, that the success of the former would prove a most decisive experimental refutation of the truth of the latter; and we think that it can only be accounted for by a supposed necessity on the part of the author, to soften, as much as in him lay, the appearance of innovation. For our own parts, we are perfectly persuaded, that the specific plans which he has suggested,

would not, if put into execution, arrest the progress of pauperism. The management might receive such an impulse for a few years, by the novelty of the proposed arrangement, as might serve to give a temporary check to the rate of its acceleration. But we hold it to be an axiom on this subject, that wherever the principle of a compulsory provision for the poor is admitted and acted upon, there must, under every variety in the mode of administration, be an increase, in the long run, both of expense to the higher, and of discomfort to the lower orders of society.

It is but justice, however, to Mr Ewing, to add, that it does not distinctly appear in how far he approves of the plans which he here suggests for the consideration and choice of the Town Hospital; that he abstains from giving to any of them, in a positive way, the weight of his own personal recommendation; and that, in drawing up this book, he acts as the organ of a Committee, of which he is one of the members.

STATE AND PROSPECTS

OF

MANUFACTURES

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE OF AN ARTICLE

IN

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW OF MAY, 1820,

ON

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE CITY OF GLASGOW, COMPRISING AN ACCOUNT OF ITS PUBLIC BUILDINGS, CHARITIES, AND OTHER CONCERNS.

BY JAMES CLELAND.

STATE AND PROSPECTS

OF

MANUFACTURES.

This book is the production of one of the citizens of Glasgow; and contains a great body of useful and curious information. Nothing, indeed, can be more interesting than an enlightened and comprehensive account of such an assemblage of human beings as are now to be found in the second-rate towns of our empire: And, when one thinks of the mighty influence of Cities, either as the organs of political sentiment, or the engines of political disturbance—when one regards the economy of their trade, and sees in living operation what that is which originates its many and increasing fluctuations—one cannot but look on the authentic memorials of such facts as are presented to our notice in this volume, with the same sense of their utility, as we would do on the rudiments of an important science, or on the first and solid materials of any deeply interesting speculation. There is one point, however, which at this moment engrosses all that we can spare of our attention.

So late as the end of last August, when the wages for weaving were at the lowest, Mr Cleland made a survey of the employed and unemployed hand-looms of Glasgow and its immediate neighbourhood. Taking a radius of about five miles from the centre of the city, thus excluding Paisley, but embracing the whole suburbs, and many very populous villages,—he found 18,537 looms altogether, within the limits which we have just now specified; of which 13,281 were still working, and 5256 were, for the time, abandoned. It is to be observed, however, that, in many instances, several looms belong to one proprietor, which are worked in conjunction with himself, either by journeymen, or the members of his own family; and that this, of course, reduces both the number of weaving families upon the whole, and also that number of them who had resigned their wonted employment.

It is satisfying to have such a correct statement of an evil connected with the severest commercial distress that ever perhaps our country was involved in,—and in a quarter, too, where that distress was understood to be greatest. When the arithmetic of its actual dimensions is thus laid before us, it brings both the cause and the remedy more within the management of one's understanding. But it will require a little consideration, to enable us to calculate the true amount, and understand the true character of this great calamity.

In the *first* place, then, it ought to be kept in mind, that there are particular lines of employment, where a given excess of workmen is sure to create a much greater proportional reduction in the rate

of their wages. Should twenty thousand labourers, in a given branch of industry, so meet the demand for their services, as to afford to each of them a fair remuneration, then an additional thousand coming into competition with those who are already at work, may very possibly lower, by much more than a twentieth part, the price of their labour. In other words, the consequent deficiency of wages might go greatly beyond the fractional addition that had thus been made to the number of labourers.

It is thus that, in certain kinds of work, a very small excess of hands may bring a very heavy distress and depression upon a whole body of operatives. The urgency of a few more than are wanted, soliciting for employment, and satisfied with any terms, rather than be kept out of it, may bring down the terms to the whole profession, in a ratio so large, that the entire maintenance of these additional applicants for work would not nearly cost so much as is lost, upon the whole, by the body of their fellow workmen in the shape of reduced wages. For example, should two shillings a-day be a fair remuneration for labour, and should it be the actual remuneration earned by twenty thousand workmen at some particular kind of it, an additional thousand might be maintained at this rate daily for an hundred pounds. But we should not be surprised to find that the effect of their appearance and of their competition was to bring down the daily wages to eighteen-pence. Now, this would degrade beneath the average of comfort, twenty-one thousand workmen, by sixpence a-day

to each, or by five hundred and twenty-five pounds a-day to them all, taken collectively. In other words, a certain redundancy of men might entail a calamity upon their profession, which, when measured arithmetically, will be found to exceed, by upwards of five times the whole expense, either of maintaining them in idleness, or of giving them full and adequate wages at another employment.

The above statement, we are persuaded, will recommend itself to the experience of all practical men;—nor do we think it difficult to apprehend the rationale of it. Men must have a subsistence for themselves and their families; and if this is only to be had through the medium of employment, men must have employment. If they cannot earn thereby a plentiful subsistence, they will rather put up with a scanty subsistence than have none at all. And thus it is that a surplus thousand of labourers may cheapen work, by a fraction greatly larger than the excess of their own number, over the former number of labourers;—and thus, from the necessity of a few, may there emanate an adverse influence which will spread itself over the many—and, with a very slight importation of more hands into a branch of industry already sufficiently occupied, may there be imported an evil so weighty, as to overbear for a time the whole profession, and to call forth from all the members of it a general outcry of apprehension and distress.

This view of the subject, if it contain in it matter of regret, that a cause so trivial should operate a mischief so extensive, contains in it also matter of consolation. As we have already travelled from

the cause to the effect, we have only to travel back again from the effect to the cause; and if the cause be trivial, it may be remedied by a trivial exertion. The actual magnitude of any present or existing distress amongst a body of workmen, will not alarm us into a fear of its perpetuity, if we are right in tracing it to a cause so remediable, as to a small fractional excess in the number of these workmen. Should the addition of a thousand men on a branch of industry which affords sufficient maintenance to twenty thousand, have the effect of reducing their maintenance by one-fourth, then, when a case of such grievous reduction actually occurs, it is fair to infer, that the transference or removal of a single twentieth part of these labourers, would operate as a restorative to the comfort and circumstances of them all. And, when one thinks of the many natural securities which there are for bringing about an adjustment of those partial and temporary differences that obtain between the demand for labour and the number of labourers, he may both admit the severity of an existing pressure, and be foremost in every sound and practicable measure for its alleviation, without reading in it the symptoms of any great national catastrophe, or losing his confidence in the stability of his country's wealth and greatness.

It is proper, however, to remark, that there are certain kinds of work where these fluctuations are far more sudden than in others—where the appearance of a given excess of hands will tell on the reduction of wages in a shorter time—and where the withdrawing this excess would also operate

more speedily in restoring these wages to their former and ordinary level. Were the *opus operandum* a certain definite task, like the cutting down of harvest, the amount of which could neither be increased nor diminished, the effect would be quite immediate. The same holds true, though in a less degree, of the employment of household servants, and of the employment of ground labour in most of its varieties. In these instances, there is a certain quantity of work to be done; and this quantity, generally speaking, does not admit of being much extended, merely on the temptation of labour being offered at a cheaper rate; and in as far as the possible extent of a work is an element that is invariable, in so far will either an excess or deficiency of labourers for that work tell instantly on the wages of their employment. The same effect would follow in any manufacture, where the raw material out of which a commodity is worked could not be raised or accumulated to a degree much exceeding the annual consumption, and where the commodity itself did not admit of being so accumulated. The employment of baking exemplifies this. Speaking generally, the grain of one year is consumed in the year following; and if the grain does not admit of being stored beyond certain limits, the bread that is manufactured admits still less of it. A steady number of operative bakers will thus suffice for the need of a country. So that, should a number of good journeymen in that profession suddenly appear amongst us, though only amounting to a twentieth part of their whole, the effect in bringing down their wages would both be great

and instantaneous; while the full and speedy restoration of these wages, on the transference of a small portion of these operatives to other lines of employment, would convince us, how a cause, seemingly weak and disproportionate, may work for a time a serious and alarming depression in the comfort of an industrious class of the community.

Now, it so happens, that in the manufacture by which cotton is turned into muslin, there are many circumstances which serve to affect the law of those fluctuations to which the wages of the operatives are liable. There is, in the first place, a very great facility of learning the work; so that, in a short period of prosperity, an indefinite number of additional hands can be turned to the loom. In the second place, the raw material of successive seasons may be stored to any amount in warehouses; and, should it be necessary, the annual quantity of cotton raised in the world could be far more easily augmented a hundredfold, than the annual quantity of corn could be doubled. There is no limit, therefore, to the bringing in of workmen in this particular line. And, in the third place, what they do work may also be stored. The muslin of very many months may lie in reserve for future demand—while bread cannot lie in reserve for as many days. Additional bakers, therefore, can never be admitted beyond what are sufficient for supplying the current consumption of this article: But additional weavers can be admitted for the purposes of future as well as of present consumption; and, to add to the elasticity of the latter concern, the wages of the operative weaver form a far larger ingredient

of the price of muslin, than the wages of the operative baker do of the price of bread; so that if the wages of the former become much lower by the increase of the number of weavers, the muslin that they work becomes much cheaper, and the wearing of it becomes much more general; for, in the nature of things, the cheapness of an article of fine and ornamental dress will add much more to the consumption of that article, than the cheapness of bread can ever add to the consumption of bread.

Put together all these considerations, and it will be seen, how, though when an excess of competitors appears for *any* employment that requires a distinct and definite number of hands, the effect in reducing its wages is quite instantaneous—yet the same excess might appear for the weaving of muslin, without so instantaneous, or, at least for the time, so great a reduction in the wages. There ought, of course, on the very first appearance of this excess, to be a descending movement in the price of this labour; but, ere it has completed its course, it is met by a counter-movement on the part of capitalists and master manufacturers, who will feel encouraged, for a time, by this cheapening of labour, and will store up its produce beyond the present demand of the market, and will accumulate goods for distant and future sales, under the present advantage of having these goods wrought at a rate which is gradually sinking. In this way, an increase in the supply of labour may for a time *increase* the demand for it; not so as to keep up its price, for then the very stimulus of the augmenting demand would be done away—but so as to

prevent the depression of wages from coming suddenly to its maximum—so as to smooth, and to graduate the descent by which the operatives are conducted from the level of sufficiency to an abyss of most pitiable degradation. Had their work been of such a nature, that, like that of cutting down the harvest, no more than a given quantity could be admitted within the limits of each month, then all at once would the excess of workmen have had its full effect in lowering the price of their work. But it is the power of producing and heaping up to any extent, which, apart from sudden fluctuations in the demand for the article, causes the price of the work to descend, not by a desultory, but by a continuous movement; and postpones the period when the remuneration of the workmen arrives at the lowest point in the line of its variation.

And when the price has arrived at this point, there are two peculiar causes why it should linger obstinately there. The article produced by operative bakers is carried off in a single day; and there is always a fresh recurring demand for the same quantity of work from them. Their work does not admit of being much extended; and therefore an excess of workmen must cause an immediate and certain fall of wages. But neither does the produce of their work admit of being accumulated, so that there is no intervening stock of their article between them and their consumers; and therefore, in parting with the excess of their hands, the restoration of their wages would be just as sudden as the fall. But the work of weavers does admit of being extended, and therefore the fall

of their wages may be gradual. The produce of their work admits also of being accumulated; and for this reason the reviving of their wages is gradual also. The stock on hand may be a barrier for many months between the need of the purchaser, and the work of the operative; and, in the declining prices of a glutted market, the inducement for keeping up this stock may be done away. In these circumstances, a much larger excess of weavers must go out of employment, that the matter may be righted speedily. It is not enough that the quantity of work be reduced to the *current demand* for the article. It must be reduced *beneath* this demand, so as to permit the stock to clear away. If more operatives can be taken on in this line of industry than in most others, without so immediate a reduction of their wages, more also must go off, for the purpose of bringing about a speedy restoration. So that we are not aware at present of any branch of employment whatever where the circumstances of the operatives, both in respect of the price of their work, and the number of workmen, are doomed to alternate along so extended an arch of vibration.

But there is still another cause by which this ascending process must be retarded. If the price of labour is reduced, while at the same time it is paid according to its quantity, the workmen will naturally strive to make up by the latter, what they lose in the former. It is in vain that a small fraction of the labourers be withdrawn, if they who remain shall, by increased application to their work, continue to throw off the same quantity of the ar-

ticle upon the whole. There may, in this case, be fewer workmen, but not less work than before; and, in such a state of things, it obviously requires a much larger reduction of hands, ere the supply of their labour can be so far diminished, as that the stock of goods should clear away, and the demand of the consumer come again into contact with the work of the operative. So much is there in this cause, that when it was understood in Glasgow that the number of working looms was *only* reduced from eighteen to thirteen thousand, it was feared that the supply of work would still be as great as ever, and that the process of clearing away the piled and accumulated produce could not yet begin. In the mean time, there cannot be conceived a more cruel dilemma for the poor operative, than that, in eking out a subsistence for his family, he should thus overwork himself, and, by that miserable effort, should only strengthen the barrier that lies in the way of his final deliverance; that for the relief of the present urgencies of Nature, he should be compelled to put forth more than the strength of Nature, and yet find, as the direct result of his exertion, a lengthening out of the period of his distress; that the necessity should thus be laid upon him of what may be called a self-destroying process,—accumulating as he does, with his own hand, the materials of his own wretchedness, and so annoying and overwhelming the earth with the multitude of his commodities, that she looks upon his offerings as an offence, rather than an obligation, and refuses to sustain him. Misery like this may appear singular in its origin; and there-

fore is it of importance to know, that it is so frequent and extensive in its operation, as to be realized amongst us in the form of a periodic visitation, and often prolonged for months, or even for years together—lest it should be left to pine in neglect, or, what is still worse, should be aggravated by mischievous and misjudging interferences.

We have not here taken into account that fluctuation of demand which arises from a change in the state of foreign markets: though this, of course, will aggravate all the effects that we have now adverted to. But independently of this new and powerful element, we conceive that the phenomenon of our present severe and lengthened depression is sufficiently explained. Nor ought it to be a matter of wonder, that the great accession of hands which came in upon the body of our operative weavers at the breaking up of the war establishments, should gradually have conducted them to this extremity of distress; and that now, though at the distance of several years, and certainly with a few intermediate vibrations in their state of comfort, they should have arrived at a degradation from which assuredly nothing but a reduction in their numbers can either permanently or effectually deliver them.

There appear to be three ways of meeting such a calamity. The *first* is, to supply the defective wages, by a direct charitable allowance. This looks the most obvious way of it. Should a family be starving on five shillings a-week, there is not a more obvious and straightforward method of relieving them, than simply to eke out for them, say

three shillings more, and thus enable them to live on eight shillings a-week. This is just what a kind and wealthy neighbour would do with a destitute family at his door; and much of what is tantamount to this, is done by generous individuals going forth unseen on the territory of such a visitation. But what may be done in detail, by the distinct and separate liberalities of the charitable, is often attempted to be done in the gross, by means of a public, and, therefore, visible combination. No one can question the amiableness of such a proceeding; but if truth be permitted to have a place in the argument along with tenderness, it will soon be acknowledged, that what is compassion at the origin, is cruelty in the result: For a fund raised to supply a defect in the wages of any class of labourers, has the sure effect of keeping many at their employment, who would else have cast about for another mode of subsistence. Wherever there is such a fund, there will not be so free or so copious a dispersion of hands away from a branch of overstocked industry; insomuch that, had a plan of this kind been adopted previous to the month of August, there would not have been nearly so great a reduction in the number of working looms, as from eighteen thousand to thirteen thousand, in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. The glut would have been longer perpetuated in the market; and either a further, or a more lengthened depression of wages would have resulted from such an interference. We have sometimes known, as the effect of a subscription fund, that the argument employed by the manufacturer, in the higgling which obtains

between him and the operative, is, that the latter has his recourse upon the fund. But at all events, and whether there be any such avowal or not upon the subject, the fund which is raised to supply wages, is sure in the end to reduce them: This, indeed, is its precise function and necessary operation: So that, after all, the individual cases of alleviation which it produces, are far more than counterbalanced by the general and protracted sufferings which it brings upon the whole;—the consequence infallibly being, that that fractional excess of workmen, which it is of so much importance to detach from the mass, still adheres to it; till the nominal wages and the charitable allowance put together, come in fact to make out no more than the scanty remuneration which is ever attendant on an overdone employment. Thus it is, that men who, with the clearing away of goods from the market, might in a few months have been earning an adequate subsistence for their families, and that in the shape of a fair and honourable recompense for their work, may be forced to drivel out a much longer period in a penury composed of two stinted ingredients, and rendered more degrading by the contribution which charity has made to it.

This is just the operation of poor rates in England, when employed in supplying the inadequacy of wages. They ultimately displace as much in the shape of wages, as is rendered in the shape of charity; and men who, if the regulation of their numbers had been left to natural causes, would have continued scarce enough to have dictated the remuneration of an entire maintenance for their

work, have been collected in such multitudes, as to have stripped themselves of all control over this matter, and brought the question of their subsistence under the determination of church-wardens and overseers. It is thus that this fallacious system has inflicted on the labouring classes of that country a permanent degradation. What the Legislature intended as a boon, has turned out to be a sore bereavement. Had they confined it to one class of labourers, as weavers for example, then weavers would just have sunk under the oppression of this apparent privilege, and been singled out to public notice as the miserable and degraded caste of our nation. They would thereby have descended beneath the level of all other labourers, and been, in our land, what hewers of wood, and drawers of water were in the land of Judea. And these are not the judicious friends of the poor, but their unwise advocates, or perhaps their designing agitators, who would plead, as a right of theirs, for that which passes in the first instance into the pockets of their employers, and then goes to stamp an unnatural cheapness on the produce of their employment.]

Such works as those of Mr Cleland are of great value, and are well fitted to pioneer the way of the economist to a sound and experimental conclusion on questions of great interest. He has extended his survey beyond the precincts of the immediate neighbourhood of Glasgow; or rather, instead of a survey, he has given an estimate of the country looms now employed by the manufacturers of Glasgow, and compares it with the number employed antecedently to the present depression in that

branch of our manufactures. We should like to see a similar estimate for Manchester and its vicinity; as nothing could be more important than to learn the proportion between the employed and unemployed looms in the great weaving districts of England, and thus to ascertain what effect the Poor laws have had in fixing the labourers of a declining branch of industry down to their employment, and so in increasing and accelerating its declension. It is quite clear, that neither the feeling nor the clamour of distress were at all less in the country where a compulsory provision has a full, than in the country where it has yet only obtained a partial operation. But it were desirable to know in how far, allured by the promise of their own institutions, the weavers of England were kept together at their work, instead of going off by those outlets which, in times of fluctuation and distress, enable the people of every country, in a certain degree, to shift their wonted employments.

And here we may state an inequality between Scotch and English operatives, to which many of our southern neighbours may never perhaps have adverted. Should the Poor-rates of England reduce the *nominal* price of weaving there to five shillings a-week, that becomes the *real* price to the operative in Scotland. This at least holds true, without any qualification, in as far as the Poor-rate for manufacturing workmen is contributed, not by the capitalists who employ them, but by other capitalists, or by the landed interest of the country. The manufacturers of Glasgow must be undersold by those of Manchester, if the latter

can hire their workmen with a bounty upon their work, in the shape of a legal provision; and, to put the capitalists in both places on a footing, the whole hardship of the difference must fall on the weavers whom they employ. To obtain an equalization, there are only two methods; either to extend the Poor-rate to Scotland, or to abolish that part of the English practice, by which the fund is made applicable to a defect of work, or to a defect of wages. We are quite satisfied, that the effect of the former method would be, to sink the whole profession, as by a death-warrant, into a state of helpless and incurable degradation—and that the effect of the latter method would be, to raise the price of weaving to the rate of allowance that is now made up of its present nominal price, and of the supplemental charity which goes to the English operative. It would ultimately work out a great and a glorious emancipation for the weavers of England; and, to Scotland, it would come with all the force and charm of an immediate deliverance. And, placed as we are, in the pestilent neighbourhood of our sister country, we would plead for this partial abolition of her whole charitable system, as the prelude to a gradual and entire abolition; so that this worthless and pernicious nuisance which her mistaken policy has entailed upon our empire, may, in time, be utterly swept away.

There is another, and certainly a better, way of meeting this distress. Instead of supplying the deficient wages of the operatives in their employment, take so many of them away from their employment. Provide other work for them, where they may have

a somewhat better remuneration than they have at their own work. In this way you will disengage so many, for a season, from a line of industry that is already overdone, and perhaps may transfer a number of weavers permanently to other employments. Thus may the supply of goods be reduced beneath the consumption, and the market, relieved of its superabundant stock, return to natural prices, and a fair remuneration for the operative. This, certainly, is a far more legitimate object for a public subscription, than the former; and the only hazard is, that after it is once started, and is obtruded on the view of the workmen as a likely expedient for their deliverance, it may not be supported with enough of vigour and liberality on the part of the benevolent. For, to pay the difference between bad wages and better, is not nearly so expensive as to pay the better wages altogether:— And it is this which tempts the charitable to the first method of supplementing, rather than to the second method of withdrawing; and, even when the second method is entered upon by any public or combined movement, it is scarcely ever done in such a style of magnitude as to work any sensible effect. There will, no doubt, be a certain fraction withdrawn; but probably a very small proportion of the number that would need to be withdrawn, or of the number that would withdraw themselves, if left to prosecute their own expedients, without any delusive influence being set up to deceive and to detain them in their present situation. Government, for example, has held out the resource of emigration. But this they ought not to have done,

unless they were in a condition to prosecute the enterprise on so great a scale as to work a national effect. Otherwise, they have only diverted individuals from their own measures for emigration, and in fact have lessened the relief of this expedient to the whole country—for many have trusted in this way to facilities which have not been realized. The city of Glasgow, in like manner, employs a few hundred operative weavers at a public work, the expense of which is in part defrayed by a public subscription. But, by this very measure, she has detained within her territory many more operatives than she employs. She has held out a prospect of employment at home which she has not been able to realize; and has so slackened the emigration to Ireland and other parts of the country, that we have at this moment more occupied looms in consequence of the public work thus provided, than we would have had without it. When the transference was left to itself, we find that there was an abandonment of looms to the extent of three thousand and upwards.* The whole public work takes up scarcely as many hundreds. But the name and the expectation of it detained a great many more; of whom, a few were admitted to the privilege of this extra employment, and the rest were obliged to hang on under the chance either of an enlargement or a vacancy. So that all which has been publicly done in this way, is rather an apology for a good thing, than the

* It should be remarked here, that though upwards of 5000 looms were found unoccupied, yet nearly 2000 out of the whole 18,000 would, upon an average, be unoccupied even in ordinary times.

good thing itself. It was great, perhaps, in reference to the sums contributed by several individuals; but quite of Lilliputian dimensions in reference to the evil to be combated. And it were well that all corporations, and more especially Government, the greatest corporation in our land, were more aware of the insignificance of all that they have done, and, perhaps of all that they can do, to moderate the evils of a deranged and distempered commerce.

But the same powerlessness of effort cannot be charged on the benevolence of wealthy and enlightened individuals. Government is one, and city corporations are few; but rich individuals are many: and, were a wise direction given to their charity, there is no doubt of a great and valuable result coming out of it. The efforts of landholders and country gentlemen to procure extra work for our weavers, have created a most important and salutary diversion in our present emergencies. A list of all the individuals who have thus signalized themselves, would furnish a most gratifying record of the kind sympathy that is to be found, in our day, under the guidance of wisdom and just discernment. The names of the Duke of Hamilton, and Lords Belhaven and Douglas, in Lanarkshire, and of Mr Maxwell in the county of Renfrew, have a foremost place in this history of pure and honourable patriotism.

There is another and a far more excellent way—not to be attained, certainly, but by a change of habit among the workmen themselves—yet such a change as may be greatly promoted by those whose

condition or character gives them influence in society. We have always been of opinion, that the main use of a Savings Bank was, not to elevate labourers into the class of capitalists, but to equalize and improve their condition as labourers. We should like them to have each a small capital, not wherewith to become manufacturers, but wherewith to control manufacturers. It is in this way (and we can see no other) that they will be enabled to weather all the fluctuations to which trade is liable. It is the cruel necessity of overworking which feeds the mischief of superabundant stock, and which renders so very large a transference of hands necessary ere the market can be relieved of the load under which it groans and languishes. Now, this is a necessity that can only be felt by men on the brink of starvation, who live from hand to mouth, and have scarcely more than the day's earnings for the subsistence of the day. Let these men only be enabled, on the produce of former accumulations, to live through a season of depression while they work moderately, or, if any of them should so choose it, while they do not work at all,—and they would not only lighten such a period of its wretchedness, but they would inconceivably shorten its duration. The overplus of manufactured goods, which is the cause of miserable wages, would soon clear away under that restriction of work which would naturally follow on the part of men who did not choose, because they did not need, to work for miserable wages. What is now a protracted season of suffering and discontent to the lower orders, would, in these circum-

stances, become to them a short but brilliant career of holiday enjoyment. The report of a heavy downfal of wages, instead of sounding like a knell of despair in their ears, would be their signal for rising up to play. We have heard, that there does not exist in our empire a more intellectual and accomplished order of workmen than the weavers of Paisley. It was their habit, we understand, to abandon their looms throughout the half or nearly the whole of each Saturday, and to spend this time in gardening, or in the enjoyment of a country walk. It is true, that such time might sometimes be viciously spent; but still we should rejoice in such a degree of sufficiency among our operatives, as that they could afford a lawful day of every week for their amusement, and still more, that they could afford whole months of relaxed and diminished industry, when industry was underpaid. This is the dignified posture which they might attain; but only after the return of better times, and through the medium of their own sober and determined economy. Every shilling laid up in store, and kept in reserve for the evil day, would strengthen the barrier against such a visitation of distress and difficulty as that from which we are yet scarcely emerging. The very habits too, which helped them to accumulate in the season of well paid work, would form our best guarantee against the vicious or immoral abuse of this accumulation, in the season either of entire or comparative inactivity. We would expect an increase of reading, and the growth of literary cultivation, and the steady advancement of virtuous and religious

habits,—and, altogether, a greater weight of character and influence among the labouring classes, as the permanent results of such a system. Instead of being the victims of every adverse movement in trade, they would become its most effective regulators

This is the eminence that the labourers of our nation are fully capable both of reaching and of maintaining. But it is neither the Poor-rate of England, nor the Law of Parochial Aid in Scotland, that will help them on to it. These have only deceived them away from the path which leads to independence; and, amid all the complaints which have been raised against the system of a compulsory provision for the poor, nothing is more certain than that our poor, because underpaid operatives, are the principal sufferers by it. Every other class in society has its compensation. It is paid back again to the manufacturer in the shape of a reduction in the wages of his workmen, and to the landholder by a reduction in the price of all manufactured articles. It is only the operative himself, who appears to be pensioned by it, that is really impoverished. It has deadened all those incitements to accumulation which would have raised him and his fellow-labourers to a footing of permanent security in the State—And, not till their eyes have been opened to the whole mischief and cruelty of this delusion—not till they see where it is that their most powerful and malignant enemy is lying in ambush—not till they have learned that, under the guise of charity, there has been an influence at work for many years, which

has arrested the march of the lower orders to the elevation that naturally and rightfully belongs to them, and till they come to understand that it is by their own exertion and self-denial alone that they can win their way to it—not, in short, till the popular cry is for the abolition, rather than the extension of pauperism, will our labouring classes have attained their full share of comfort and importance in the commonwealth.

END OF VOLUME TWENTIETH.

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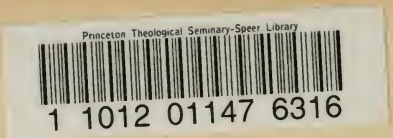
THE Twenty-first Volume of Dr. CHALMERS' WORKS, which should have appeared in January next, will not be published till April. After which, other four Volumes, comprehending his Lectures on the Romans, will complete the Work.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